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THE LION-KILLER.

Adventures of
JULES GÉRARD,
THE
“Lion-Killer.”



LONDON:
LAMBERT AND CO., 462, NEW OXFORD STREET
(NEAR BEDFORD SQUARE);

And Sold by every Bookseller in Town and Country.

LE "TUEUR DE LIONS."

THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES

OF

JULES GÉRARD,

THE "LION-KILLER,"

COMPRISING

HIS TEN YEARS' CAMPAIGNS AMONG THE LIONS
OF NORTHERN AFRICA.

LONDON:

LAMBERT & CO., 462, NEW OXFORD STREET,
(NEAR BEDFORD SQUARE.)

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PREFACE

TO THE ENGLISH EDITION.

THE editor of the following pages, of which the first French edition only appeared in the month of August, 1855, enjoyed the satisfaction of a personal interview with the celebrated author, during a short stay which the latter made in Paris in November last, previous to his return to the scene of his exploits in Algeria.

It was not without a deep feeling of interest and curiosity that he entered the presence of so remarkable a man. How far would his exterior correspond with the impression which a knowledge of his extraordinary life would naturally create? What manner of man was this, who had so often overcome, alone, and in the darkness of night, the terrible king of beasts; and who had extorted the admiring reverence of many a fierce tribe for whom, in the outset of his perilous career, he had only been an object of hatred and derision, a “dog of a Christian?”

The answer to these natural queries was somewhat unexpected. After a few moments of delay,

passed in a room of which the floor was covered with lion skins instead of a carpet, Lieutenant Gérard entered. I was already familiar with his portrait, of which almost every street in Paris contains at least one, and the first glance assured me that it was an exact resemblance. But what struck me most forcibly during the long interview which followed, was the utter absence of all that swagger and pretention which marks ordinary heroes,—a gentleness of voice and manner which was almost feminine,—and a simplicity and dignity which I could easily imagine was the result, at least in part, of ten years' intercourse with the grave and silent children of the desert.

It seemed to me hardly possible that those delicate and slender hands, which he crossed before him after the manner of the Arabs, had really given the death-blow to so many of the hitherto invincible monarchs of the Atlas; and it was not until I had examined, as closely as courtesy permitted me to do, his long and sinewy arms, erect port, clear and expressive eye, and a certain singular mixture of modesty and self-confidence, that I was able to recognise in him the greatest of all hunters since the days of Nimrod, and the man who has confronted with calm and reflecting courage, during a long series of years, more appalling dangers than have perhaps ever been encountered by any other being, warrior or sportsman, living or dead.

A recent writer in the *Westminster Review*, No. XVII., January, 1856, who does full justice to the "fascinating interest" of Gérard's autobiography, uses the following language, which may be appropriately quoted in this place:—

"It is quite clear, on comparing the works of Gérard and Gordon Cumming, that the lion of Northern Africa is a far more formidable enemy than the lion of Southern Africa. Not only does Cumming seem to have triumphed without difficulty, but he had to combat lions who ran away from dogs, and generally avoided coming to blows with him. This is quite contrary to Gérard's experience. The lion of Northern Africa is but too ready to attack: hungry or not, the sight of an enemy rouses his fury at once; and as to cowardice, Gérard's narrative leaves no room for such a suspicion. Indeed the lion, so far from running away from the hunter, attacks a whole tribe of armed Arabs, and often scatters them to the winds. No Arab thinks of attacking a lion unless supported by at least twenty muskets; and even then, if the lion is killed, it is not until he has committed serious damage in their ranks."

Nothing can be more remote from my intention, nor probably from that of the *Westminster* reviewer, than to depreciate the remarkable hunting achievements of Mr. Gordon Cumming, whose name I found was known to Jules Gérard, since the latter expressed to me his regret that his want of acquaint-

ance with our language did not allow him to have the pleasure of reading Cumming's volumes. But there is a difference in the character and career of these two celebrated hunters, quite as worthy of notice as that which appears to exist between the lions of Northern and Southern Africa, and to which, in introducing the French "*Lion-killer*" to the English public, it may not be inexpedient to refer.

Cumming,—as he avows in his own frank and manly style, prosecuted his long war against animals *feræ nature* from two motives,—the love of sport, and the equally legitimate desire of gain; and if, while he has earned undisputed honours by his gallantry and skill, he has also acquired more solid advantages by the sale or exhibition of his numerous trophies, he must be a pitiful and carping critic who can find in this fact any ground of cavil or censure.

But it is simply a matter of fairness and equity, as well as essential to the appreciation of Gérard's chivalrous and disinterested character, to observe, that the latter has not only been impelled to accept the perilous risks of his adventurous career by more elevated motives, but that he has inflexibly refused to accept even the smallest fraction of the ample gifts which Arab gratitude would have freely placed at his disposal. Long before this he might have attained to affluence if he would have consented to receive the appropriate offerings of horses and herds, of which the heads of tribes, whose property he had often

saved from inevitable destruction, earnestly besought his acceptance. Except the Cross of the Legion of Honour, and a few beautiful weapons conferred upon him by the Emperor of Austria, the Comte de Paris, and others, he has gained no other recompense, and coveted no greater opulence, than the modest revenues of a lieutenant of Spahis.

But even this circumstance, significant as it is, does not sufficiently indicate the generous and delicate spirit in which Gérard has always consistently performed what he considers the "mission" imposed upon him. It would be unjust both to him and to his English readers, not to place him before them in his true character, a knowledge of which will be the best possible preparation for the perusal of his unexampled exploits.

It must be said, then, without a shadow of exaggeration, that Jules Gérard regards himself as *an instrument of Providence* in protecting from the most frightful dangers, from ruin, and from death, families and tribes, who, in spite of unquestionable courage, are no match for the terrible king of beasts, and but feebly qualified to protect themselves from his irresistible assault. It was natural that I should seize the opportunity of interrogating the *Lion-killer* on this point as well as on others; and a single specimen of our conversation will suffice as an indication of the tone of mind to which I refer.

Having inquired of him whether long habit and

familiarity with a peril so perpetually recurring had not blunted his apprehensions, in preparing for each new encounter with his formidable antagonist, he replied,—that, on the contrary, every fresh combat appeared to him more full of hazard than the previous one, more doubtful in its possible results, more suggestive of the serious conviction, that neither skill nor courage were sufficient to secure victory ; and he added this example :—

After spending on one occasion many hours of a long winter night, up to the knees in snow,—for the scene of his combat was a lofty mountain,—he found himself close upon a huge lion, who had stealthily approached him, and had arrived within a few paces of the spot on which he stood. In spite of the intense cold which he had so long endured, the emotion excited by his imminent peril covered him with a profuse sweat, and for a moment he was unnerved. “ But I am not in the habit,” continued he, with a simplicity and absence of affectation which it was impossible not to appreciate, “ of trusting in my own strength ; I lifted my eyes for a moment to heaven ; and conscious that I did not wage war against the lion either from vain-glory or from the desire of gain, I confidently asked for help. In one instant my pulse was as calm as it is at this moment, my arm as firm as if it had been of steel, and in the next the lion was lying dead, almost at my feet.”

It is the great charm of personal intercourse with

this remarkable man, that he is as free from vanity or conceit as if he were the most obscure soldier in the French army, and as anxious to avoid public notice and applause, as minor heroes are solicitous to attract them.

The work of which a translation is here offered, is not the only production of M. Gérard's pen. Some years ago he published an interesting volume on the various modes of hunting the wild beasts of Northern Africa¹, a work of a somewhat technical character, and designed as a guide for those who might afterwards indulge themselves in the dangerous delights of Algerian sports. But of the ten chapters which compose that book, only three refer to lion-hunting, the remaining seven being occupied with a description of the chase of hyenas, wild boars, and other still more ignoble brutes. The present volume, however, contains a new and complete record of his successive combats, during a period of ten years, with the king of beasts, the most minute account of the habits of the latter, and the actual details of many a deadly struggle and hard won victory.

It must be added, that it contains also various episodes,—such as the history of the unfortunate Smail, of the acute and successful scamp Mohamed-ben-Oumbark, of the lion Hubert who died of grief, the exquisite tale of Aïcha and her terrible

¹ The Editor is glad to see that this work is also to appear in English.

suitor, and others,—which would alone suffice to invest the work with a high degree of interest, even if it contained not one of those thrilling incidents of the author's own life which give it its special character. Nor can the reader fail to be interested on meeting, as he will in the course of this narrative, the now celebrated names of St. Arnaud and Canrobert, both African heroes, and of the gallant General de Loumel, whose brilliant career was sadly but honourably closed before the walls of Sebastopol.

T. W. M.

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THE LION-KILLER:

OR,

THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF

JULES GERARD.

CHAPTER I.

MY VOCATION.

DID you ever know, from your own sad experience, what it is, having been the child of parents sufficiently affluent to diffuse some benefits around them, to awake on some melancholy morn, as indigent as the unfortunates whom they were wont to relieve but the day before? . . . and did you ever happen to lose at the same time, together with your fortune, a father or a mother, for whom you would most joyfully have shed the last drop of your blood?

Then you may understand the frail and timid child, longing to become a strong and courageous man, that he may be the help and the protector of a family bereaved not only of the goods of this world, but of the natural and lawful support of its chief, who was its only strength and its most precious treasure.

Such are the circumstances—I must at the outset confess it with a noble feeling of pride—which made me “the Lion-Killer;” such is the secret motive that brought me to stand in the path of the king of creation, of that formidable giant with whom I did not fear, poor weak dwarf that I am, to wage war; but an honest, open, loyal

war, such as ought to be carried on between two brave adversaries, of whom the one will take the life of the other, standing face to face, chance for chance, and God alone for witness of the fight.

One last confession to the reader will conclude my preamble, and that is, that at my very first steps in this adventurous career, I found a painful analogy between the condition of my own family, struck by disaster and death, and that of the Arab family of whom the lion has devoured the last head of cattle, and then the chief.

It is not difficult to fancy my deep emotion and my impatience to meet the enemy, when, invited under the tent he had just laid waste, I found the women all in tears, children too young to comprehend the extent of their loss, and a white-haired old man glancing bitterly on his emaciated arm, once so terrible in the hour of revenge.

I once heard a young man, still beardless, almost a child, impose silence upon the wives of his father, killed on the preceding day by a lion, and tell them, in that accent which echoes directly from the heart: "To-morrow we will mourn, lament, and weep at leisure; to-day we want blood, to wash off our own precious blood, to avenge my father, your lord and master. Where are his weapons? I will have them; produce them instantly."

But let us not anticipate incidents hereafter to be described. In these memoirs, the true diary of a hunter, written day by day, deed by deed, each episode must appear in its time and place, and in due order. In the mean time, let us begin with the history of my vocation, and say something about my arrival on the African shores.

Whenever I meet a troop of little boys playing at soldiers in the street, some dressed up in paper caps, some armed with wooden swords and guns of the same dangerous description, I stop to watch their operations. If the *corps-d'armée* is in the least numerous, it will be an extraordinary chance if you do not find in its ranks one who is destined to be a true soldier. It is not always the commander; you are sometimes compelled to seek your future hero between a couple of boobies, whom you

might readily take for little girls dressed up as boys. But, on scrutinizing more narrowly all those infantine countenances, you will not fail to pick out some little fellow, very easy to distinguish from his companions, either by his manner of holding his arms, or by his air (not of a swaggering blade, for these are but peacocks, fit only to display their shining plumage), but by his thoroughly earnest manner, which seems to say, "This is my right place, and this business suits me exactly."

For my part, when I behold such an expression of face, I cannot help thinking in my own mind, that there is little doubt of that boy making one day a good soldier... But to what profession will his parents bring him up? ... They will perhaps make a notary of him, or an advocate;—put a pen in his hands and bid him use it somehow;—whereas already, scarcely out of his shell, he has all the aspect of a trooper. In such a case I would give any thing to know the father of that child, to have it in my power to wait upon him and say: "When I was your son's age, I used to play at soldiers like him; my parents wished me to follow quite another profession than the military one. I loved my parents and respected them sincerely, but yet, you see, I am a soldier."

Indeed, when a vocation is quite true, quite decided, there is no mistaking it.

When I was only ten years old, I used to hunt with an old arquebuse the sparrows who came to ravage the fruit in my father's garden, and the cats who made war on the sparrows. I collected all the children of the neighbourhood, and summoned them to the enjoyment of mimic fights. At sixteen, I could have given lessons in fencing and in pugilism.

I saw one day, at a village feast, a man, a huge giant-like ruffian, ill-use a woman in the most brutal manner: a crowd stood round them, looked on in silence, and nobody interfered. I stepped between the victim and her tyrant, and said to the latter, "You are a coward! leave this woman in peace, or I shall knock you down on the spot." The man was beaten by the boy, hissed by the crowd, and the woman slipped away avenged and grateful.

In the meantime I was longing to try my strength on a more important stage than the fencing-school.

In those days one was apt to meet with a species of individuals, not as yet classed in the book of humanity, and who since have usurped the pompous name of *lions*. The vapourish airs, impudent swagger, and insolent bearing of these gentlemen grated on my nerves in a particularly unsufferable manner, and I declared myself their sworn enemy. But, must I confess it? . . . after several successive encounters, gone through without the slightest scratch, finding my adversaries not in the least formidable, I hung up my foils once more in their own place. Endowed with a firm will, and with unbounded confidence, I promised myself never to employ henceforth those means of action except to accomplish the object I had marked out in my own mind. My fixed and determined idea was to confront the greatest dangers that might come in my way;—to seek by every possible means those which did not naturally occur; so as both to replace in the worthiest manner the head of my family, and to ameliorate its lot.

It was with such dispositions that I enlisted in the *Spahis*¹, and landed at *Bone* the 19th of June, 1842.

Like most of the young men who go to Africa, I expected soon to find an opportunity of distinguishing myself. Indeed, I had scarcely buttoned on my uniform, when an officer stepped up and said to me: “You are just come from France, I engage you for my orderly.”

I asked him what I should have to do, to which he replied: “You will have to dress my two horses and your own, to polish my arms, and clean my boots.”

I was violently tempted to answer the officer that I should have felt peculiarly gratified had he proposed to render me the same service; but I reflected that I was a soldier, and that it was not worth while beginning by being put under arrest, so I merely said that his horses would be badly dressed, his arms badly polished, and his boots still more badly cleaned. The officer looked at me from head to foot; I bowed politely and we parted.

An hour after I was sent for by the paymaster.

“Can you write?”

French regiments in *Algeria* mainly composed of natives.

“Yes, captain.”

“Very good; inspection is coming on, I have much to do; you will work in my office.”

I was directed to sit down immediately before a table covered with all sorts of writing implements, and one of the secretaries handed me over a paper to copy. As soon as it was done,—and I was not long about it,—I presented it to the secretary, who after examining it carefully passed it to the paymaster, who at once exclaimed: “Pray, sir, what language do you write in?”

“I have copied the paper, captain.”

“What, sir! you have copied! . . but it is illegible; it is utterly impossible to decipher a single word throughout this infernal scrawl.”

I replied that I had never written so plainly in all my life; upon which I was invited to return to my quarters, and resume my service. Come, thought I, at last I am going to be a man and a soldier!

I was furnished with arms, horse, and harness all complete. Thus equipped and fitted out from head to foot, nothing was left to do but to start for the wars.

Among my new comrades there was one for whom I felt a great liking. He was an old corporal, named Rousselot, a regular type of an experienced and excellent trooper. I asked him if there was any chance of our soon taking the field.

“We shall never do any thing here,” he replied; “if you like, we will petition to form part of a squadron which is being raised at Guelma.”

Three months after we were ordered off, and we bade a joyful adieu to the town of Bone, to its seaport, gardens, and fair mountains, and the third day, from the top of a hill, we beheld the camp of Guelma, which has since become a charming little town.

Every body does not know that the corps of Spahis, with the exception of a few officers, non-commissioned officers, and soldiers, is almost entirely composed of native horsemen. To that circumstance I was indebted for the honour of being claimed as orderly during the three months I had spent at Bone.

Living constantly among the French spahis I never had

the least communication with our native brethren-in-arms, and on arriving at Guelma, I was struck with the cold reception we met with on their part. I could not speak a single word of their language, but their looks and gestures left me very little doubt of their total absence of good feeling towards us. I inquired from my friend Rousselot what might be the causes of the sort of repulsion with which we seemed to inspire the Arabs.

"They neither like wine nor those who drink it," he answered, with a most contemptuous shrug of the shoulders; "these people will never be civilized."

This was the total amount of his observation about the Arabs, after living amidst them for more than ten years.

I understood at once that I should have in him but a poor professor, if I wished to study the language, manners, and customs of the Arabs, and I resolved henceforth to do without a master. There are some situations in this world, in which you must have recourse to self-tuition.

When we arrived, there was a great talk in camp about approaching expeditions and hard fighting. I already smelt gunpowder, and dreamt of colours taken, and enemies cleft right in two. As to Rousselot, much more practical than myself, he only dreamt of *razzias* and booty. This good fellow, a first-rate soldier, if ever there was one, full of courage, frankness, and honour, longed for the fighting just as much as I did, but only to provide himself in the first place with money, and in the second with the opportunity of spending it in drink. His very limited instruction excluding all hopes of any higher grade than that of corporal, which he had obtained on the battle-field, and subsequently resigned to have the pleasure of running through all our African possessions, he had quite made up his mind to that sort of existence.

To him a campaign was a speculation, an adventure, a chance, a sort of business affair, at the issue of which he entertained pleasant visions of captured oxen, sheep, and tapirs, particularly easy to convert into money, the source of many a joyous carouse, to atone for the fatigues and privations of war. A horse, a gun, one or two *burnous*², and a saddle were, in my noble friend's eyes, the only striking

² An upper garment or cloak worn by the Arabs.

consequences of an Arab being taken or killed, and, I must add, that he held in very small esteem those who made prisoners. If he slew a chief, it was a grand affair, and his potations, so much the more copious and frequent, were indefinitely kept up, to the immense joy of his comrades.

One evening, Rousselot was telling one of the stories of his repertory which I had long known by heart, but which his favourite chums, Ott and Block, amongst others, every time received with new favour on account of the winding-up, so interesting for their German throats, whose everlasting thirst no drinking could ever quench.

The chieftain our hero was hotly pursuing, according to his recital, was not so well mounted as himself. In less time than he requires to empty a bottle, Rousselot overtakes him, puts a bullet through his head, and dismounts forthwith to take possession of his charger, which he values at 500 francs (20*l.*), his gun worth about 100, and his burnous and saddle worth about as much more.

"But," stammers out Block, "did you not search his clothes to see if he had some nice little pocket-money?"

"How many days did the carouse last out?" strikes in the matter-of-fact Ott.

"To horse, lads! to horse!" roared out the sergeant on duty, as he came in panting and blowing, "we are off in a quarter of an hour for a razzia."

"Bravo!" exclaimed Rousselot rising; "Gribouri (this was his horse's name) has made razzias such as were never heard of in this part of the country. If, to-morrow, he can only get a glimpse of a red burnous, no one shall have it but he; as to the drinking part of the business, all our comrades shall have their share of that."

After a night's march through a pelting rain, we reached the territory of the rebellious tribe, and found they had carried their property somewhere else. The warrior I was to cleave in two, the red burnous Rousselot had reckoned upon, had of course followed the emigration, and all that we saw in the shape of enemies, were a few famished hounds wandering about the place.

CHAPTER II.

A FEW NOTES ON THE WAR IN AFRICA.

THE war in Africa is so extremely peculiar, owing to the character and the customs of the adversaries to whom the French are opposed, that I have thought it proper to trace a slight sketch of it for the benefit of those who take an interest in our conquest.

The native population of Algeria is divided into three different races: the *Kabyles*, established in the mountains situated on the sea-coast, and whose habitations are fixed; the *Chaouia* (ancient Numidians), who form the largest part of the population in the province of Constantine, and whose tents, flocks, and herds, occupy the whole country included between Kabylia and the Desert; lastly, the *Arabs*, properly so called, who are masters of the oasis, who spend the summer season on the high table-lands, and who winter in the Sahara, or on its borders. As each of these three races has a mode of warfare quite peculiar to itself, I will describe them successively.

The Kabyles dwell on mountains generally well wooded, steep, and of very difficult access. They have no cavalry, but to make amends for that, they are indefatigable foot-soldiers, brave, well armed, and generally first-rate shots. To give an idea of their dexterity as marksmen, I will only say that, in a great many tribes, the father will only consent to the marriage of his daughter when his future son-in-law is clever enough to hit, with a single bullet, an egg, placed as far as the future father-in-law has been able to throw a stone.

The whole tactics of the Kabyles consist in collecting the greatest possible number of guns on the hills which command the narrow path the enemy must necessarily ascend. The commerce they carry on with our towns and in our markets affords them every opportunity to procure beforehand ample information as to the strength and composition of the troops, and their destination.

When notice has been given of some Kabyle mustering, the general commanding in chief goes himself, or sends an officer, to reconnoitre its strength and importance. If the enemy is not very numerous, he only sends forward a few companies, who carry, without even returning the natives' fire, the position they occupied, and keep it until the whole column has passed through under their protection, or until they are themselves replaced by other companies. Should the enemy, on the contrary, be in force, the general halts his column within cannon-range, and very soon you see the most daring amongst the Kabyles come down the hill-side, and approach within musket-shot, as if to defy our soldiers. After having danced, gambolled, howled, and gesticulated, to the great amusement of all, they let fly their shot, and return to the scattered groups squatted on the ridge.

As soon as they have taken breath, the battalions designed for the attack begin slowly to ascend the mountain, making use as much as possible of every bend of the ground to cover themselves. During this time some pieces of artillery are disposed in a battery, and discharge a few shells amidst the gathering to create disorder. As soon as the battalions have come within two or three hundred yards of the hill, they make a short halt to breathe, and then the bugles sound the charge, the artillery becomes silent, and officers and soldiers, at a running pace, without even returning his fire, drive the enemy out of his positions.

The Kabyles, thus dislodged, disperse on the wooded slopes or in the ravines, and wait at a short distance until the hill tops they have lost are abandoned, to take possession of them again. It often happens that this point, which commands the whole country, is chosen to establish the bivouac. In that case, whilst the troops are advancing, and are busy pitching their tents on the assigned spot, the Kabyles direct their whole attention to the advanced guard and outposts, which are sent round the camp to protect it. Unable to undertake any thing against the bivouac, every surrounding ridge being well guarded, they await the night; then they crawl noiselessly towards the points they have seen occupied in

the evening, and sometimes attack them so boldly, that for some years past the outposts regularly fortify themselves, not to run the risk of being cut up or taken prisoners.

Another measure, no less intelligent, has been adopted. The advanced posts, who are most exposed to an attack, remain till it is dark in the position which they think they can keep till the next day; then, when the enemy can no longer see them, they pull down their tents, the fires are relighted, and our men shift their quarters either to the right or to the left, lying in ambuscade so as to surprise the Kabyles when they arrive. If the enemy is content with skirmishing at a distance, our soldiers allow him to enjoy that pastime, without answering his balls, which are wasted in empty space.

I have said that the Kabyles never stand firm against our troops when they attack a commanding position defended by them; such is also the case in the passage of a river, or defile, or in the defence of a village. A vigorous attack, without any foolish skirmishing, and marching up to them either in a straight line or by convergent movements, will be quite sufficient to make them abandon their positions, without waiting to be charged with the bayonet. Nevertheless, as they always allow the columns to come very near, and as they are very good marksmen, it is not without experiencing considerable losses that a position defended by large forces can be carried.

The whole tactics of these highlanders consisting in firing upon exposed men, without exposing themselves, they take care, as I have already said, not to retire, and wait, sheltered from the balls, until they who have driven them away retreat in their turn. Then begins the really arduous task of the retreat. As soon as they hear the sound of the bugles commanding that movement, the Kabyles creep out of the rocks and bushes where they had lain crouching like wild beasts, and cautiously crawl up to the point which is about to be evacuated. It often happens that our soldiers have scarcely gone fifty yards at a running pace, when the Kabyles already appear on the very spot they occupied a minute before.

It is easy to understand the immense advantage they then have, firing on our men, who remain utterly exposed up to the moment when they meet with a small hillock, a rock, or some trees which have been occupied beforehand by a troop well ambuscaded, and beyond which they hasten to form in ambush farther on. After waiting for the pursuing enemy till he comes within proper range, they fire at him, and retire in their turn. This is called retreating *en échelons*.

Many an opportunity I have had of observing closely this sort of operation, either as attached to the general who commanded the retreat in person, or when I happened to leave my horse to take a shot along with our brave foot soldiers.

This mountain war does great honour to our troops, not only on account of the resistance, the energy, and the dexterity of the enemy they have to deal with, but also on account of the incredible fatigues they have to go through. The fact of men summoned to the ranks by lot, leaving behind them their families, their affections, their country, most of them without ambition or hopes of advancement or rewards, yet dashing with so much bravery and *entrain* through the enemy's ranks, enduring with such patience and such fortitude every species of hardships, the natural consequence of those distant expeditions, can only be accounted for by the careless intrepidity and the inexhaustible fund of spirits which form the principal feature in the character of the French soldier. One single trait in that of the African soldier will suffice to make him known and appreciated at his just value.

However small his pay, and however great his love for pleasure when once returned to garrison, the soldier greatly prefers the mountain—that is, Kabylia—with nothing to expect but fatigues and bullets, to the plain with its plentiful resources for the enjoyment of life, and booty which can be converted into cash. The reason is plainly this. In Kabylia he is certain to find plenty of hard fighting; whereas he may often return from the plain without having fired a single shot. The case however is otherwise with the cavalry,

who well remember the splendid razzias they have formerly made, and who, for this reason and many others, love the plain as much as they hate the mountain.

The moment a tribe shows symptoms of rebellion, or actually shakes off the yoke, measures are forthwith taken to inflict exemplary chastisement. A few campaigns have sufficed to put the chiefs of our army quite up to all the tricks and shifts of our wandering enemies; and now disorder and insurrection are very closely followed by punishment.

Except in some rare cases, when the cavalry act alone against large tribes, the Arabs are easily mastered when vigorously attacked; and, in truth, our cavalry in Africa is deficient neither in spirit nor in vigour; but here, as in Kabylia, the great difficulty is the retreat. If the enemy has been surprised after a night march, he will strain every nerve to regain possession of his flocks and tents; and when every resistance becomes vain, he will maintain a running fight to cover the retreat of the women and children. But no sooner has he placed these in safety, than he returns, more numerous and more fierce, in hope to regain what he has lost. It is a grand and imposing spectacle to see one of our columns driving away a herd of forty thousand head of every species of cattle, the fortune of a whole tribe, with its tents, baggage, and furniture.

If some battalions of infantry have been able to come up in time to take their share in the razzia, the Arabs can but harass our troops, without having it in their power to undertake any thing serious against them. But such is not the case when the cavalry alone is engaged, and not sufficiently numerous to cover the flanks and the rear of the column; then the enemy forms in thick groups, mutually rousing and exciting each other with ferocious screams, and he dashes furiously on the point he supposes to be the weakest, to endeavour to make a gap. It is only by extreme coolness and self-possession in the retreat, and order in the offensive movements, that an expedition of this nature, against a numerous and enterprising foe, can be crowned with success. It is especially in these circumstances that

officers and soldiers experienced in this sort of war are capable of rendering the most important services.

Within these few years we have made great progress in the plain war, and in the present day we can easily overcome a whole tribe without striking a single blow. Formerly our generals were obliged to trust to native chiefs, who often deceived their confidence, and informed the tribes of the moment our troops were to be sent on to chastise them. Thanks to a most useful and intelligent institution all this is now done away with.

In each division, subdivision, and circle, the superior authority commands the services of an "Arabian office," composed of officers well versed in the knowledge of the country, and thoroughly familiar with the language, customs, and habits of the natives. Through the medium of these officers, the generals can prepare an expedition with the utmost secrecy, and reach the enemy at any distance.

I have only a few more words to add about the war of the oasis.

Although more wandering and unsettled than the Chaouias, whose tribes scarcely ever come out of a defined and rather restricted circle, the Arabs possess some fixed and permanent habitations, which serve them as stores and magazines; they form villages, constructed in the very centre of the oasis, which covers and protects them with its forest of palm-trees, and thousands of little gardens, planted with fruit-trees, and surrounded by walls. Besides these natural fortifications, each village is enclosed by strong ramparts, flanked with towers; so that it is easy to comprehend the strong resistance that can be made by the defenders of the oasis, and the serious losses they can inflict on their enemies.

As an example, I will briefly describe the taking of Zaatcha, in the year 1849.

Bou-zian, cheik of this village, having revolted against the French authority, induced the population of the surrounding villages to follow him in his rebellion.

The superior officer commanding at Batna marched against the oasis of Zaatcha with part of the second regiment of the foreign legion which he commanded. The

intention of the chief of the expedition was to rush on the place and carry it with the bayonet;—and it is very true that the intrepidity and long experience of the officers and soldiers placed under his orders fully justified that intention;—but they met there an enemy more dangerous than the guns of the Arabs, and against which the bayonet itself was of no avail.

After killing or ronting the defenders of the gardens, the attacking column rushed towards the village walls to scale them. Here, however, it was checked by a ditch of great width, very deep, and full of water, which encompassed the village; and whilst officers and soldiers vied with each other to clear this obstacle, thousands of Arabs sheltered by a wall, shot them down close at hand.

In spite of the severe losses he had already experienced, the commander, St. Germain, who directed the attack, turned all his efforts against one of the gates of Zaatcha. During a whole hour, and under a raking fire, our soldiers laboured actively to open a breach. Every blow of the axe was answered by the Arabs with ten shots, and the soldiers slaughtered at their work were instantly replaced by others. St. Germain, expecting the besieged to sally forth the instant he withdrew his troops, and fearing for his dead and wounded, whom he did not choose to leave in their power, gave the signal for retreat. He had by this time lost one-third of his men.

About two months later, General Herbillon, who was engaged on an expedition in Kabylia during the first attack of Zaatcha, proceeded to lay siege to this place.

I shall not relate the various and fluctuating incidents of this severe campaign, which will ever remain deeply engraved in the memory of those who took part in it; but to make the reader understand what a serious affair the war of the oasis is, I will only say, that Zaatcha held out fifty-two days against our best troops, whose chief, during the whole time of the siege, never ceased to expose himself to the enemy's balls like a private soldier. At last, after a most desperate resistance, the place was taken by three columns, headed by the Colonels Canrobert, de Lourmel, and de Barral; and every one

of its defenders, including Bou-zian, suffered himself to be killed at his post without retreating an inch.

Such is the war of Africa, which many persons treat rather too lightly ; for the enemy, whether Arab or Kabyle, is remarkable for great personal courage. When favoured by circumstances, he has ever resisted with tenacity, and inflicted upon us severe losses ; and, moreover, they who have the misfortune to fall into his hands, can never expect mercy or compassion.

The most singular thing in this sort of war is that he who keeps on the lookout for an opportunity to signalize himself, will very seldom meet one, unless he has a command ; whereas chance often favours those who do not trouble their heads about it.

I had spent already two years in Africa, had been present at several expeditions where a very respectable number of cartridges had been expended, and my arms were still in a most distressing state of innocence. Most of the time that the infantry was engaged, we only looked on ; and when we happened to charge, I no sooner got away from the main troop than my friend Rousselot would come galloping after me, for fear, he said, I should be carried off prisoner. We hunted thus together, looking out for some group of horsemen, or some wandering red burnous, and we always had to return, after hearing plenty of balls whistling round our ears, without even seeing where they came from.

In the evening, at bivouac, Rousselot kept constantly talking about his campaigns of Oran, and pressed me to accompany him to that province, whither he had resolved to return. We had just both of us been named corporals, and he assured me that by giving up our grade, we might easily change our regiment. Yielding to my friend's desire, we returned together to Guelma in the early part of the year 1844, quite determined to abandon that part of the country.

CHAPTER III.

MY FIRST STEPS IN LION-HUNTING.

WHEN an event, fortunate or unfortunate, comes to pass, the Arab generally says *mectoub*; "it was written." The reader will judge if it was not my turn to use the Arab's proverb.

On the evening of my arrival at the camp I went as usual to pay a last visit to my horse before going to bed. After wishing him good-night, I walked about a few moments on the rampart, which was close to the stables, and commanded the plain. Musing on my intended departure for Oran, I observed a group of native spahis squatted on the ridge of the walls, and as silent as the very stones they were seated on.

At the moment I was passing by them, an officer, himself a native, left the group, came up to me, and, without a word, took my hand and made me sit down near him. The moon, whose silvery rays shone full on the spahis, enabled me to perceive the pensive and mournful air which pervaded all their countenances. As they had not visited their families for a considerable time on account of the length of the expedition, I supposed they had heard of the death of some relation, and I put the question to the officer, who spoke our language fluently.

"Bend your ear in that direction," said he, "towards the plain."

I then heard a distant sound, sometimes hollow and rumbling, sometimes sharp and shrill, but which appeared very formidable, considering the immense distance from which it reached the ear. Satisfied that I had heard, the officer said, "Do you know what that is?"

"I do not," replied I.

"Well then, it is the LION," he rejoined; "the lion of the Archioua, who during the time of our absence in the campaign has swept away and torn to pieces the best

part of our flocks and herds, and will yet devour all that remains of them."

"But now that you have returned," said I to the officer, "and are going back to-morrow to your respective douars, you will kill the lion; and once dead, he will injure you no more."

Never was the most egregious nonsense received as were those few words, which I had uttered quite naturally. After saluting my simplicity with a regular shower of jokes, quibbles, and jests of all sorts, the assembly became serious again, and explained to me how it was that the Arabs much preferred to let the lion devour their cattle than to venture to attack him; and, in short, it was proved to me as clear as two and two make four, that the king of beasts had a perfect right to laugh at mankind in the shape of Arabs.

It was late, and we were about to retire; I said to the officer and to the astounded spahis, "If it please God, I, who am not an Arab, will kill the lion, and he shall devour you no more."

Leaving these fellows to comment in their own way upon this declaration *ex abrupto*, which I had just made in perfect seriousness, I sat down again on the rampart and began to reflect upon what I had just proposed.

I could not imagine how, passionately fond of the chase as I was, I never had thought of the lions since I had been in Africa; and I reflected that but for a fortuitous circumstance, I was about to leave a country where a new career was opening before me. I recalled to mind every word of the Arabs, and the title of "lord" they respectfully gave the lion when relating his prowess. My heart bounded with joy at the thought that soon perhaps this all-powerful lord, the terror of the country, would bite the dust under the victorious ball of a "dog of a Christian."

The lion at this moment, as if to give me a hint that I was making rather a cheap bargain of his life, roared appallingly; and, I must say, his roars now appeared to me more formidable than before. I listened with attention to that tremendous voice, which no other can equal,

reverberated by a thousand distant echoes ; and when it was hushed, I shuddered from head to foot.

I had never beheld a lion in the state of nature ; and this mighty organ told sufficiently that he who possessed it, and could with perfect ease to himself emit such stupendous sounds, must indeed be full of might, strong in courage, and look upon man as a very pitiful creature.

Without having settled as yet in my mind the right way to go to work in attacking the lion, I clearly understood the task to be a very serious and difficult one ; and after hearing him roar again, I needed the recollection of my pledged word, and of the results which were to follow my success, in order not to prevent my resolution giving way. As long as I balanced in my mind the probable chances of the struggle, I judged the contest to be far above the powers of the most courageous man ; but on examining the motives of my determination, I felt a hope that my design might be agreeable to Him who is all-powerful, and from that moment I rose full of confidence, and ready to attempt even the impossible.

The next day, or rather a few hours later—for I had spent the whole night in the open air—I communicated my intentions to Rousselot. He heard my announcement with enthusiasm, not that he had any intention of joining me (he was more than ever resolved to leave the province), but because he thought my enterprise noble and hazardous, and hoped I might attain success. Ten years have now elapsed since I parted with this friend. I know neither where he is, nor what he may be doing at this moment ; but it would afford me pleasure if he should hereafter read these lines, and thus know that, in very critical circumstances, when I longed for the help of a sure and devoted arm, I thought of him, and of him alone.

Without more delay I made the acquaintance of some spahis, whose *douars*¹, situated on the Oued-Meza, at a league from Guelma, were often visited by the lion. They scarcely looked upon my intention to rid them of this terrible guest as a serious one, and in their eyes

¹ A collection of tents, forming an Arab village.

I was but a new victim to add to so many others ; yet they consented to accompany me in my exploration.

On the right bank of the stream were four or five douars which belonged to the spahis and their families. Here I was invited to rest under a tent, which was instantly filled with visitors.

At first I looked upon this as an act of politeness ; but I very soon found out that these people were laughing at me and at my pretensions. As I was now beginning to understand and speak the Arabian language, I could make out their conversation, and I heard the epithet *medjenoun* (fool) more than once repeated by some of the old men. Without taking the trouble to convince them that I was in the full enjoyment of my mental faculties, I simply asked for a guide who might show me the spots habitually haunted by the lion.

Upon this a species of *Hercules*, who, since my entrance into the tent, had lain stretched before me, with his head in both his hands, and his eyes fixed on mine, shot up like a spring, and raising one of the sides of the tent to show the interior precincts of the douar, "It is here he comes at night," said he to me, in a tone of rage ; "here, amidst the men you see, and who are talking to you. Is this a beard, think you ?" he added, taking a large handful of his own ; "and is this a man's arm ?" he pursued, uncovering his right arm up to the shoulder ; "and do you take us for a pack of women,—you, who presume to ask us to place you in presence of the lion, while he comes and devours our property daily before our eyes, and we suffer him to do so ? Listen to me," he ended, in a paroxysm of fury, "the day you kill the lion this beard shall fall, and I will become your handmaid."

After this sally, which seemed to me as curious as it was ridiculous, the fellow, unable to master any longer his feelings, and fearful, no doubt, of breaking the laws of Arabian hospitality by committing some personal outrage against me, stalked away majestically, draping himself in his burnous.

One of the spahis then proposed to place me that evening in the enclosure, among the cattle. The whole

assembly at once exclaimed that my balls might kill some one under the tents; that some awful catastrophe would inevitably take place should the lion be only wounded; and that, since I was so very desirous of furnishing him with a supper, I had but to wait on his road, which they would show me presently.

Some men having offered themselves as guides, we set off together; and after ascending for some distance the course of the stream, we arrived at the skirts of a wood which covered both banks and seemed very thick: it was composed of hollyhocks and lentise trees².

The Arabs pointed out to me a rock surrounded by a close thicket of a sombre colour, saying that the lion, when he left his domains of the archioua to come and visit them, made that his resting-place. I inquired if it was possible ever to come near the lord of this manor; to which they replied, laughing, that none of them had ever visited him, but that they were about to show me the way. A quarter of an hour afterwards we were in a path, a yard in breadth, which led into the thicket.

"This," said the Arab who took the lead, "is the road the *Master* follows in coming down to us. There is another track over there on the other side of the water; they both lead to his dwelling. Now," he added, "if you wish to see him, you have nothing to do but to prepare a watch-hole on either of these roads, and to come and wait for him at night with a good bait. When you have killed him, we shall come and kiss your feet and your hands, and tell you we are your humble servants. Meanwhile permit us to return to our own affairs."

And without more ado those amiable gentlemen walked coolly back to their douar.

As if the Arab's words had been an injunction, I sat down upon a stone on the side of the road, and, had not a jackal screeched at a few paces from me, I should have remained until night buried in the world of reflections inspired by all I had seen and heard. As it was too late, and I was too badly armed, to think of undertaking any thing that evening, I repaired to the camp, reflecting on the bad reception I had met with from the Arabs.

² A resinous tree very common in Algeria.

Coming among them with the desire of delivering them from an enemy so dangerous that they did not dare to attack him themselves, and who levied such a fearful tribute upon them, I had reason to expect that they would have received me well, or at least have expressed some gratitude for my good intentions. Instead of this, I had found them cold, indifferent, taunting,—I had almost said threatening; for the Hercules-like fellow I have mentioned above had very distinctly shown me how delighted he would have been to prove the superiority of his own arm over mine.

I concluded from all this that my enterprise was still more serious and difficult than I had supposed; that I was looked upon as a fool or a boaster; and that the less they believed in the possibility of my success, the more signal the effect of that success would be. From that day I had but one thought;—surely to accomplish my object.

With the assistance of some workmen, under the direction of an Arab experienced in that kind of trade, I had a watch-hole made and covered over on the side of one of the paths frequented by the lion. This consisted of an excavation one yard broad and one yard deep, roofed over with trees loaded with large stones, and covered with moistened earth. Several loop-holes were left open on the side towards the path, and in the opposite direction an aperture was left to serve as a door, which was closed by a huge stone, brought on purpose from a great distance.

This watch-hole, thus constructed, was a real citadel, which I should have liked to demolish at once, had not the Arab who was its architect assured me that, strong as it was, he would not dare pass the night in it alone; and that I might very probably be pulled out of my hole by the lion making his way without more ado through the roof. Finding me rather hard to convince, the Arab told me the following story:

“The Pacha of Algiers had selected among the Turks of his army some picked men to hunt the lion. One of them, called Chakar, had acquired a great celebrity in the country; every time he returned loaded with new

spoils, the Pacha made him sit by his side, an honour he granted to no other person; and besides the gold he lavished upon him at every fresh victory, he presented him with a splendid velvet cloak, embroidered with silk and gold, called *cafetan*, which is only given to the greatest chiefs. Chakar being at last loaded with riches, presents, and honours; his parents, his friends, and the Pacha himself kept saying to him, 'Enough, Chakar, enough! let this one be the last; God is with you, it is true; but do not wear out and abuse the goodness of God!' But Chakar was never satisfied.

"One day he arrived at Mahouna, his favourite field of battle, where the inhabitants received him as usual with joy and gratitude. A lion had invaded the country a month before, and was busy devouring great and small, as if they had been created only for his private use.

"The first day was devoted to rest. In the evening an ox was killed in consideration of the brave Turk, and eaten up in honour of the lion, whose approaching demise was celebrated by innumerable volleys of musketry, that he might be duly informed of the coming event. The next day the hunter visited the different watch-holes of this kind, which he had prepared on previous occasions, and he found the *spoor*³ of the lion's heavy foot close to one of them. A little before nightfall he returned to this spot, followed by an Arab who carried the goat destined to serve as a bait. Chakar entered first, the goat was pushed in behind him, and the door being secured, the Arab withdrew, saying, 'God be with you.'

"Towards midnight a shot resounded in the mountain. The Arabs rushed out of their tents, and heard the lion roar so dreadfully, that the trees and rocks actually shook again. A second shot followed the first, after that a third, and then the lion was silent.

"Next morning, at the earliest dawn of day, all the Arabs ran to the watch-hole, which they found utterly destroyed from top to bottom. Chakar's gun and one of his pistols were found in the place, and so was the goat, quite dead and crushed under the ruins. Amidst the

³ The trace left by the feet of an animal.

trunks of trees and stones forming the roof, which in his fury the lion had dispersed, here and there were distinguished traces of blood, the marks of the animal's claws, and those of a body which he had sometimes carried, and sometimes dragged along. About twenty paces farther under wood they found the second pistol, and very near it the man and the lion, entwined as it were in each other's folds, like two serpents.

"Chakar's head had disappeared entirely in the lion's mouth; his left hand was concealed under the mane, and his right hand, covered with blood, still grasped a dagger, buried up to the hilt in the animal's flank. The three balls which the Turk put in his gun had penetrated behind the shoulder, the ball of the first pistol entered the breast, and the last one the ear.

"You see," said the Arab, at the end of his recital, "there can be no shame in hiding in a watch-hole; and I can promise you that when you find yourself quite alone in this one, you will think more than once on Chakar's tragical end, and maybe you will happen to look up to see if your roof is sufficiently strong."

What I should have wished to do, would have been to meet the lion in the open light of day, and thus to have an opportunity of fighting him loyally, face to face. I did not entertain the idea of acting in the same manner at night, on account of the darkness, which would render useless my means of attack, and throw me defenceless in the enemy's jaws. And yet this notion of waiting for him in a watch-hole sadly grated against my feelings. I felt, in fact, as if I was about to commit some wilful and clandestine murder; and in spite of the preceding story, the veracity of which I subsequently ascertained, I much doubted whether a success of that description would not be regarded by others, as by myself,—that is, as too *easy*.

Ignorant of the country and of the lion's ways and habits, as well as deprived of the information and advice of the Arabs, I found myself greatly at a loss. It was then as a last resource, and quite against my will, that I consented to make use of the watch-hole I had caused to be constructed, having first made arrangements with the

farrier, whose business it was to despatch the sick horses, to furnish me with a bait worthy of the lion, if not in quality at least in quantity.

My comrades undertook to explain my absence during the night, in case it was noticed; and one fine April night I left the camp, (wrapped up in a dark burnous to conceal my arms,) and joined the farrier, who awaited me on the brink of the wood, with a horse, the devoted victim. An hour afterwards the execution took place, a few yards from my extemporized block-house.

I made the best use of the remaining daylight to load my regimental gun, and two horse pistols, which composed my arsenal.

The watch-hole was situated in the very centre of the mountain, and upon an eminence commanding the whole country. As long as it was light, and I could distinctly see the horsemen and the cattle in the plain, the rocks and the trees on the mountain, I remained outside. When the night came fairly on, screening by degrees in its sombre shades even the nearest objects around me, I entered, or rather crept into my fort.

I was scarcely settled in it, after closing carefully the door, when I heard some steps on the path, and a few minutes afterwards I clearly detected the sound of famished jaws, tearing away greedily at the bait. I looked out of every crevice without seeing any thing, not even the horse, which, however, was distant only four or five paces;—and still the beast devoured on.

Was it a lion? was it a hyena, or a jackal? Unable to distinguish by sight what it might be, I strove to form an idea of the animal's strength by the sound it produced. At the end of half an hour's uncertainty and expectation, it was no longer the same noise, but a most infernal uproar; not only near the horse, but all around me, and even over my head. There was growling, tearing, and stamping, as if all the devils had deserted the lower regions, to gather here at a junketing. At one moment I firmly believed the roof would be fairly knocked in over my head.

I had just snatched up a pistol to receive the first who should enter, when the stone which served as door fell

down, and a head with two large glaring red eyes appeared on the threshold. Without attempting to determine what it might be, I fired, and in rolled a beast, twisting and kicking in the convulsions of agony.

Let the reader be comforted, as I was myself, when I discovered it to be but a simple jackal, who, whilst his friends were loudly celebrating my arrival among them, had paid with a ball in his brains the indiscretion of walking in without leave. The rest of the night passed away pretty quietly; and day began to dawn without any lion having appeared.

The following day, at the same hour, I was again at my post, where I found, instead of the horse, his skeleton, as clean as if it had come out of a cabinet of anatomy. One glance at the ground, stamped all over and strewed with feathers, showed me that the vultures had taken the charge of clearing away its smallest remains.

Until I could obtain another bait of the same kind, I procured—like Chakar—a goat. The unfortunate beast cried with all its might, as long as it saw the light, but from the moment night set in until dawn, it remained most obstinately dumb. So this time I had all my trouble, and this rather tiresome *tête-à-tête* for nothing, except the distractions caused by the jackals.

These gentlemen, it appears, did not require to hear the goat to guess that it was there, but kept constantly scratching at my door, in spite of the severe lesson one of them had received but the night before. Some of them were even indiscreet enough to poke their noses through my windows, but, as I smoked a good deal to keep away sleep, they walked off, expressing in their own fashion their perfect disgust for the fumes of tobacco.

On returning to Guelma I sought out the Arab architect mentioned above, and inquired of him how the Turk had managed to make his goat scream during the night.

“Nothing is easier,” he said; “just run a small string through its ear; when it is silent pull the string, and the pain will make it scream fast enough.”

Before taking up my pen to write this book, I determined to initiate the reader in all the various emotions

and sensations I had experienced in my hunting life. I therefore begin by the confession of a weakness, which, however, I am ready to commit again and again. The thought, in truth, of torturing a poor, inoffensive animal revolted me; and that very day the goat was restored to her flock. A short time afterwards I had the opportunity of procuring another sick horse, which I ordered to be felled at the same spot as before.

The first night having passed without any result, in order to prevent a second dissection of my bait by the vultures, I took care to cover it over with branches loaded with stones, a precaution which fully answered its purpose. During the day I could see from the camp a flight of those birds hovering over the mountain; but when I returned at night the horse was happily untouched.

It would be somewhat tedious both to the reader and myself, were I to recount all the nights I spent in this manner, and all the horses or mules who became the prey of the same beasts, without the lion condescending to take his share of the banquet. I will only say, for the benefit of those who are content to kill any thing provided they do kill something, that in my place they might have made in the course of a few nights a most beautiful collection of carnivorous animals; minus, however, the king of the species. As for me, I was satisfied with a few hyenas and three vultures' talons, which some of my friends had asked for. From the very first night that I had taken possession of the watch-hole I had not heard the lion.

Every now and then I interrogated the spahis, and they always assured me of his presence in the country, and told me of the losses they had sustained. I was getting tired, and beginning to despair of success, when one fine evening, as I was ascending the path I had so often explored already, I observed the prints of an enormous foot, such as I had never seen before. There could be no mistake about it; it was the lion: the lion had actually stood on the very spot I was now treading!

"But when," I musingly cogitated, "when can he have been here; since I did not remark his spoor this morn-

ing? He must have ascended the mountain very shortly after I came down from it, and by the same road! And thus I have been as near as possible meeting him nose to nose, on this very path, which he has passed over perhaps an hour ago!"

I remembered that on the preceding evening I had been told that I should have to be early on horseback to go to exercise; and in order to escape blame or punishment, I had left my post earlier than usual; but yet the day was beginning to dawn, and if the foot-prints I now perceived had been there at that moment, they certainly would not have escaped my notice. By following my usual itinerary I arrived at my watch-hole, without once losing sight of the lion's spoor. Having been in a hurry in the morning, I had not covered over the horse as usual, but, nevertheless, the vultures had not ventured to touch it. It was, therefore, easy to see that the lion had not even condescended to go near the bait, which had only been placed there for him.

Perhaps, thought I, he was already glutted; but he will not fail to come this evening, now that he has seen this prey on his road.

My heart leapt with emotion and joy; the mountains appeared to me more beautiful now that I was certain of the master's presence; I smelt no more the unpleasant exhalations of that half-putrified horse, and my solitary watch-hole was henceforth transformed into a chamber of delight. I must confess, however, that remembering its construction, I was inquiring within my own mind whether, in case of attack by storm, the trees which composed my roof, could possibly resist for any length of time those enormous paws, whose large prints were visible all around me.

Just at the moment I was about to enter into my fort, I heard far away in the mountain a sound like the sharp squeal of a pig when it is killed; then, a moment after, a noise of the shaking of branches, and the rumbling of stones rolling down, as if a troop of horsemen were galloping under the trees towards me. Without being able to explain the cause of all this hubbub, I cocked my gun and pistols, and facing the ravine, the brushwood of

which was moving about and bending, I stood firm on the look-out. In less than one minute this species of avalanche had come to within twenty paces of me.

I knew not which way to turn, for it came right and left, presenting a very wide front, with a noise which I could not understand, and therefore did not hear with much satisfaction. All of a sudden a huge wild boar burst out on the path, almost between my legs, panting and grunting at a rate which testified at the same time the terror that caused him to run, and the mistake I had made in taking any serious notice of all this uproar and disturbance.

I allowed this first animal, and likewise the whole troop of his companions, to pass under the barrel of my gun without sending them a single ball. When silence was again established, I bethought myself of the screams of distress which I had first heard, and I concluded that the lion, tired with sheep and oxen, and profoundly despising my horse, had wisely resolved to change his diet, and treat himself to a slice of wild boar. Leaving the ascertaining of this fact for the dawn of day; as night was now closing in, I got into my watch-hole, more with the intention to rest myself than to be on the look-out.

I had been there about an hour when the roar of the lion began; first softly, as if he was talking to himself, then so tremendously that the walls and the roof of my hovel actually shook. I seemed to be choking in that vile hole; cooped up between four narrow walls, and unable to see any thing before or behind me. Feeling a strong desire to be free, and in the open air, I stepped out in order to listen more at ease.

The lion's roars were not continuous, but at intervals of a quarter of an hour, more or less. They were generally announced by a sort of hollow, guttural, and prolonged sigh, or groan; to produce which, it was clear, he had not to make the slightest effort. This, after a silence of a few seconds, was succeeded by a rumbling noise coming from the chest, and appearing to issue from the mouth by a distension of the cheeks and a contraction of the lips. This fearful rumbling, at first very low, was gradually

raised to the highest and sharpest pitch, and at last subsided in the same manner as it had begun.

After repeating five or six times this thundering roar, the extreme power of which it is impossible to describe, the lion ended by the same number of low, hoarse screams and moans,—which much resembled repeated efforts to disgorge something from the throat,—the last being very much prolonged. It was clear that towards the end he must have opened his mouth to its fullest extent, as if he were trying to vomit.

In vain I ransacked my memory to find a point of comparison between the deep-toned thunder of the lion's roar and any thing I had ever heard before: I could find none. The bellowing of a mad bull alone seemed to present a kind of analogy; with this difference, however, that it appeared to be to the lion's roar what the report of a pistol might be to that of a cannon, or even less. After roaring for more than two hours without moving, the lion descended towards the valley, no doubt in order to drink; for this time there was a much longer silence.

Soon afterwards, I saw a number of fires kindled afar in the plain, and I heard the men and the women of the douars screaming and screeching together, dogs and all, as if they were possessed. I fancied that, awakened by the lion's roars, they had jumped up, and dreading his visit, were endeavouring to keep him off by their clamours and by their fires.

As far as I could judge, the lion seemed to be following the path upon which the Arabs had left me the day of my first excursion, and in but a few moments afterwards his roar was heard in the midst of the douars. This brought the screaming, barking, and firing quite to a paroxysm; but the whole of this noise the lion in one instant overpowered with his thunder-like voice. Then it seemed as if he pursued quietly his walk, obliging all those he passed by to rise, to sound all their instruments, and to light their fires, as men would do at the passing by of some puissant monarch.

I only ceased to hear him with the dawn of day, and when he had reached his domain of the archioua, which

was three leagues distant from my post of observation. As soon as I had sufficient light to see the tracks of the wild boars, I followed them backwards in hopes of finding the one I supposed to have been devoured by the lion.

On reaching the skirt of a small glade, about a thousand yards distant from my watch-hole and in the depth of the forest, I descried something black, which formed a spot on the grass that had been burnt yellow by the scorching sun. It was the head of the wild boar, armed with beautifully white, sharp tusks. This, together with the tail, the feet, and the entrails, were all that remained of the banquet. One might have supposed that the ground would be beaten, and torn up by the struggle between the lion and the wild boar; but I was surprised to find only the deep, well-marked prints of the lion's hind paws; which were longer than, but not so broad as the front ones, with which he had grappled and stopped the animal in its flight.

There was a large lentise tree rather thick and branchy, and somewhat sequestered from the edge of the wood, under which I fancied the lion must have concealed himself, and awaited the approach of the wild boars in the glade. Indeed, I could pretty well distinguish the spot where his lordship had lain down, right in the centre of the lentise, and upon a bed of partridge feathers; those birds having probably been accustomed to seek shelter there against the burning rays of the sun.

Measuring the distance from the lentise to the boar's head, I counted twelve paces; and having cleared this point to my satisfaction, and made, for my own private use, the foregoing observations, I followed the lion's track after his supper. I found that he had lain down in several places along the edge of the glade, and that he had afterwards gone through the wood to the brook which ran at the bottom of the valley. There he had stopped to drink, and several stones were still wet with the water he had dropped from his jaws. A hundred paces farther, he had left the wood to take the path which brought him in sight of the douars.

As I passed by, several Arabs came up to me and

asked me if I had heard the lion. I was too much displeased, however, with the ungracious reception I had met with at the time of my first visit, to condescend to enter into conversation with them. Upon this they told me, with abundance of gesticulations, that if ever I succeeded in saving them from this dreadful scourge, no one would ever be deemed my equal in their eyes, and that to requite such a service, they would readily bestow on me the half of all they possessed. Without attaching any serious importance to these words, which I considered as only extorted by fear, I pledged myself to make every possible endeavour to rid them of their enemy, and I added, that last night had been more propitious to me than to the lion:—

I had, in truth, discovered many things, which I did not even so much as suspect before; for in a few minutes, and within the space of one or two thousand yards, I had had the rare chance of seeing, judging, and comparing every step and motion of the lion. I now knew that instead of running across wood, like most wild beasts, he much preferred to travel over frequented roads; I had ascertained, too, to my cost, that he preferred a living prey; I had heard, observed, and appreciated to my heart's content the tremendous thunder of his roar; I had learnt that men, and every means they might employ or invent to scare him, could never make him alter his course; and, lastly, I knew that to get over a distance of several leagues without at all hurrying himself, was to him but a constitutional walk.

I could not repeat often enough to myself how many useful, indispensable things, one single night had taught me!

And what a new prospect was now opening before me! Henceforth, no more tiresome and cowardly watch-hole ambushes in the noxious vicinity of dead and tainted animals, which poisoned the air I breathed. No more posts fixed and marked out beforehand, and where the hunter must be placed at an appointed hour; but instead of these, night-marches, and counter-marches, by a fair moonlight, over all the open roads which ran across the plain and the mountain! And then, some fine evening,

the long wished-for *tête-à-tête*,—without shelter, without obstacle, face to face, man to lion!

It was with this splendid harvest of observations, and with a heart full of joy and hope, that I returned to the camp much later that day than usual.

On the following day while sitting at the Moorish *café*, where I used to go through my course of Arabic, I saw three or four individuals walk in, bringing with them several skins still quite fresh and bloody, which seemed to me to belong to the black cattle species. After despatching one of their number to the camp, and recommending him to make haste, these fellows silently squatted down on a mat.

As I frequented this *café* solely to learn Arabic, and make my observations, each new comer, especially when he belonged to the tribes, was of course the object of my particular attention. Nothing escaped me; and if I could not always follow the conversation, the gestures and countenances, which among these people are extremely expressive, soon taught me what the subject was.

In France, you no sooner enter a *café*, than the waiters immediately dance about you, and shower upon you their offers and attentions; in Africa, on the contrary, you may enter an establishment of that sort, sit down,—lie down even, and sleep all day, and all night, if you choose,—without any one taking the slightest notice of you. These new comers had therefore settled themselves without any body remarking them; and, indeed, I had almost forgotten them myself, when my attention was aroused by the return of their messenger, who entered holding by the hand a spahi, followed by several others.

I observed that they looked very much fluttered and aghast, and that they sat down in a circle without exchanging either salutations or compliments, which is quite contrary to the habits of the Arabs.

“Well, then, what has happened again?” said at last one of the spahis, in a sharp, dry tone.

“Look!” answered one of the strangers, throwing into the middle of the circle the hide he had rolled up before him.

“Look!” said the second fellow, throwing another hide over the first one.

"Look again!" said a third man, concluding his discourse with a similar pleasant demonstration:—

"What do you say to that? Here are the hides of our very best ploughing bulls; a fourth one has been carried off and devoured in the mountain; and what is most humiliating, they have every one of them been taken and strangled, under the very yoke of our ploughs, before sunset, and within gunshot of our douars."

The reader will forgive me, I hope, for having, for once in my life rejoiced at the sight of evil; but, indeed, I could not help doing so the moment I understood the lion to be in question, and that he had just made a regular hecatomb of oxen. I say, he had just made:—for it was on the previous evening the thing had taken place; being the very day I enjoyed the pleasure of making his lordship's acquaintance.

Possibly the reader may say, that the lion, if he had taken things like a reasonable gourmand, should have been contented with one ox for his supper; and I certainly could answer nothing to that objection; unless I had some reasons for thinking that the blood of three oxen was to this insatiable glutton, what a choice bottle of Moët wine, duly iced, at the close of a good dinner, might be to some of my readers! As I know some, who are sufficiently delicate *connaisseurs* to despise any other beverage, I do not see why the lion, who is so much richer,—since every one who possesses stock may be said to be his farmer, his shepherd, or his gamekeeper,—I cannot see, I say, why the lion, who is such a magnificent lord, should not, after a copious repast, permit himself the indulgence of his fancy in some long and agreeable draughts of hot blood, instead of iced champagne. So, as I have said, I secretly rejoiced at this new misdeed of the lord and master.

The spahis now began to accuse their relations of cowardice and poltroonery for having deserted the ploughs at the approach of the lion, and at last they came to high words on the subject. From these they soon proceeded to threats and challenges, and without the timely interference of the lookers on, these affectionate relations

would have gone on to a regular battle,—a rather eccentric manner of taking revenge against their common enemy.

When their tempers had become somewhat pacified, and they had all squatted down again, the master of the establishment, who was a Turk and an old soldier of the Bey of Constantine, began to relate the exploits against the lions performed by one of his compatriots, and he finished by a comparison not over flattering for the “Romans,”—by which he meant the French.

I may as well here inform the reader of the various expressions employed by the natives of Algeria to designate a Frenchman. In the towns, the Arabs who begin to pretend to a certain approach to civilization, in order to be agreeable to us, call a Frenchman, *Francis*. In the tribes, they say *Roumi*, from Roman, *Nasari*, from Nazarene, and *Kafir*, from pagan. The two first are the most employed; the last being an expression of the most profound contempt.

You must not conclude, however, that the Romans and the Nazarenes are well thought of when they are thus styled. Indeed, it is quite enough to look at the Arab when he pronounces these words, to be convinced how little affection he has for them.

As I could not allow the Turk to treat us in this off-hand manner, I joined the conversation for the purpose of telling him that I knew a *little Roman*, capable of throwing completely into the shade all the *big Turks* who had acquired a reputation in the country, and that by doing the work infinitely better than they had ever done. Pressed by all the Mussulmans present to name this wonderful personage, in whose existence they had no faith, I turned towards the spahis and their relations, and said to them, that if I could obtain leave from my commanding officer, I would start with them that very day, and seek out the common enemy.

Every one looked at me from head to foot, as if measuring my weight and size; and a sorry jester who frequented the *café*, in which he had acquired a sort of reputation by the jokes and puns which he used to utter

at every body's expense, unwilling to let so good a chance escape, said to the Arabs:—

“You may take him with you without any fear for his safety; for the lion, seeing him so lank and slender, will not dare to touch him, for fear lest if he tear him to pieces he will not be able to find the bits again!”

This great genius treated me, as you see, quite like a puppet. He sat, squatted in the Arab fashion, below a window which opened on the market-place, and I might easily have thrashed him soundly, and then thrown him out of the window; but these two modes of punishment were equally repugnant to my feelings, and I would much rather have pretended not to understand his impudence, than to avail myself of such modes of correction. I went up to him slowly, without any apparent passion, and one second afterwards he was quite surprised to find himself outside the door, amidst a mass of articles more or less smashed and broken by his fall, and the price of which the merchants claimed from him. Every one was charmed and highly amused at the mishap of this fellow, for he happened to be disliked as a sort of bullying hector, who was always particularly insolent to those who chose to put up with his bad jokes.

I retired, much pleased with the effect produced on the minds of the Arabs by this chastisement, however insignificant in itself. An hour afterwards, some thirty or forty of them came and called for me at my quarters, and I proceeded with them to the rooms of the commander of our troop, to ask leave of absence for some days.

Captain Durand no sooner heard the motive which prompted me to request this favour, than he refused point blank to grant it, adding, that I must be mad to think of it. Next day my comrades, the spahis, made a second request, but without more success.

Some days after, I made another attempt myself. The captain then related to me, with all its particulars and details, a certain lion hunt of General Yusuf, at which he happened to be present himself, and in which about a dozen men and horses had been put *hors de combat*. This story was not exactly calculated to elevate my spirits, nor to encourage me in my present design; but my

resolution was so firmly taken, that nothing, I believe, could now have shaken it. The captain understood this, and promised to obtain the consent of M. de Tourville, who at that time commanded the *Cercle de Guelma*. Nothing then remained but to procure arms appropriate for my expedition.

The single-barrelled gun might have done for a covered watch-hole; but in the open country things would most likely take a very different turn, and a double-barrelled gun was quite indispensable.

Knowing among the planters of Guelma one of my countrymen, named Olivari, who was a very good shot, and possessed an excellent double-barrelled gun of the calibre sixteen, I borrowed it from him; and it was with this weapon I took the field in the beginning of June.

I started in company of a spahi of our troop, named Bou-aziz, whose douar, situated near the Oued-zimba, at two leagues from Guelma, had been half destroyed by the lion. We reached the douar a little before nightfall, and I had thus an opportunity of seeing the country I had to explore.

It was a broad and deep valley, the sides of which were densely covered with wood. The country was of the wildest possible aspect, and bespoke, in every way, the presence of the lion. The douar, in which we were to pass the night, was situated on a declivity perfectly bare of wood, but was surrounded by a strong hedge of olive-trees, which was no less than eight feet high and three feet thick.

We entered the douar through a small gap, and were immediately assailed by a multitude of dogs who began biting our horses, and even made some bold attempts to have a taste of our legs. On this, two or three Arabs rushed out of their tents, and by dint of stones and sticks powerfully applied, succeeded at last in making way for me through this canine mob. We dismounted before Bou-aziz's tent;—and to do him justice, I must say he did the honours of it to the best of his abilities.

Every man, woman, and child in the douar then came forth and kept staring right in my face, as if I was some particularly curious and interesting biped, and I could

hear each visitor make his reflections upon me, with the same ease and freedom as if I had been a good hundred leagues off. Supper-time having arrived, the women and children disappeared, and the men belonging to the family, with those who had been invited to stay, squatted down in a circle, forming two different groups.

A man then proceeded to deposit in the middle of the circle where I was, a sort of iron vase, into which every one began to dip his more or less dirty fingers, and which was afterwards passed to the second group, who did the same.

Shortly after this a great noise was heard on the side of the tent reserved for the women, and another man made his appearance, preceded, surrounded, and followed by a troop of dogs, with short rough hair and savage looks, pushing about, fighting, and even biting the guests who were striving to keep them off;—threatening in short to take the supper bearer by storm.

In our country we are averse to punish a dog even with a whip; but there I have seen men strike at them with the tent-posts, which are neither more nor less than stout pieces of coppice-wood cut close to the root. Sometimes the animal would run away bending its back under the blow, but sometimes it would turn upon the fellow who had half crushed it. No one can fancy what this sight is unless he has witnessed it: as for me, I confess that I was highly diverted, particularly when I was gravely presented with one of these bludgeons to defend myself against the attacks of those famished curs.

Order being at last established, and the man permitted to reach us, he deposited in the middle of our group a wooden dish of a yard's breadth, filled up to the brim with *couscoussou* (a sort of semoulia), and crowned with the half of a sheep. The dish was no sooner set down, than the guests bravely attacked the body of the sheep, always of course with father Adam's fork, and a voracity worthy of the quadrupeds, who, during that time, were kept in respect by three or four men armed with cudgels.

Mine host, perceiving that I was keeping clear of this devouring match, came and sat near me, and rescuing

some pieces from his neighbours placed them before me, with the delicate attention of dividing them in small bits with his own fingers.

As I still abstained, he made a hole with his hand in the couscousson, into which he poured a sort of white and red liquid, which seemed to be a mixture of milk and broth, and then he kneaded the whole as if to make mortar. Seeing that this did not yet tempt me, he called for a wooden spoon, with which I ventured at last to dive into the part of the dish which seemed to me least frequented.

I did not in truth find this national dish any way disagreeable, and thought I could very soon have got used to it; but not so to the preliminaries, or the manners of the guests amongst whom I had now the honour of being admitted.

When these gentlemen were properly filled, and had confessed to the fact, the monster dish was taken away and carried to the second group, who were silently awaiting it. Then the water which had already been used was again presented; but this time it was accompanied with black soap.

The things I saw sickened me to such a degree that I turned my back on the company, at the risk of passing for any thing you please.

I was no sooner seated on the carpet which had been spread for me on my arrival, than I felt something pulling the skirts of my burnous. On turning round to find out who could be shaking me in this way, I saw—friend reader, guess what I saw in the shade and under the hangings which parted me from the inner tent—I saw a huge mouth, with expanded jaws, armed with tremendous teeth, and belonging to the ugliest dog's head I had ever beheld.

Such is the amiability of the Arabian dogs, that they bite right and left, even their own masters; and fight with each other the most bloody battles, in which frequently the vanquished are devoured by their victors. One may easily understand from this, how very disagreeable the vicinity of these dogs must be to a stranger visiting the Arabs; but this is not all:—

As soon as sleeping-time comes, these interesting animals, probably to watch better, have the habit of climbing on the tents, in hopes, no doubt, to see further off. You have thus over head a concert of ten or twelve discordant voices, keeping up a chorus with the various voices of the neighbouring tents and of the whole douar, which, taking it all together, makes a noise sufficient to raise the dead. If, perchance, there should be one moment's silence, an Arab, stretched close by you, and who seems to be sound asleep, sets to howling with all his might to stir up the attention of the dogs.

Quite contrary to the usage of civilized man, noise lulls the Arab to sleep, and silence wakes him up. This is easily understood and explained by the fact of habit, and the necessity of being constantly on the look-out.

It will sometimes happen that a poor dog, feeling cold and tired, will seek refuge and a moment's sound repose under the tent: woe to him if discovered! Men and women jump up all at once, and let fall on the wretched brute a shower of blows, sadly grating to the ears of the European, thus suddenly and unpleasantly roused in the midst of his first sleep. Such, in short, are the charms of Arabian hospitality; not to speak of the insects without name or number, which feast equally on the host and on the stranger.

I found this first night insufferably long, and more than once regretted my watch-hole in the mountain, where I might at least have slumbered in peace. Fatigue however was getting the better of me; and I was just going to sleep towards morning when the furious barking and trampling of dogs redoubled over my head, and an Arab who was on guard near the horses immediately entered the tent, passed without ceremony over my body, and began kicking all the slumberers.

In one instant all the men who were snoring around me were on foot, howling and vociferating so that I could no longer hear the dogs of the douar. The women jumped up in their turn and began with the children a concert of another kind.

On going out to seek the explanation of all this uproar, I saw fires lighting up before all the tents, and Bou-aziz

walking off with Arabs loaded with dry wood. When they reached the hedge which served as an enclosure, an armful of wood was lighted up and thrown outside over the hedge, with a plentiful accompaniment of screams and howls, and the epithets of *Jew* and *pagan*. This manœuvre was very soon repeated by all the inhabitants of the douar, so that I could suppose myself assisting at a spectacle of fireworks.

At the moment when those *fusées*, or rockets of a new kind, were blazing away in their fullest splendour, and when the diabolical concert of the men, women, children, and dogs of the douar was reaching its most furious pitch, every thing was stopped, and silence reigned as if by enchantment. The pyrotechnists who had the charge of keeping up the fire dropped their pieces, and men and dogs rushed pell-mell under the tent they had just left, carrying me along with them.

The dogs, but a minute before so noisy and so ready to bite every body, seemed as if struck dumb at once and changed into lambs. I had two of them close to me who were making the most persevering efforts to hide under my burnous, and were licking my hand. The others stuck near the Arabs, who gave no heed to them and seemed dumb likewise.

All of a sudden, in the midst of this general silence, I heard in the very precincts of the douar a most tremendous noise, which made me shudder in spite of myself, and in an instant the tent was invaded and filled by a troop of animals, who rushed in one over the other without the least regard for the men, whom they trampled under their feet. This mixed multitude consisted of oxen, sheep, camels, donkeys, horses, and mules; all of them bellowing, bleating, and neighing in one united chorus. You might have believed the end of the world was come. I never in my whole life saw such a disorder or heard such a fearful uproar. It was Noah's ark at the moment of the deluge.

I know not how it happened, but I found myself carried into the midst of the women and children, who were busy joining their voices with the animals who had invaded the secret apartments. I endeavoured to extricate

myself in the best way I could from this awful confusion, and at last succeeded in getting outside in order to see what was going on. Here I found the Arabs armed with guns, exchanging occasional remarks; and the park, but lately full of cattle, seemed to me perfectly empty. All this was a mystery, when an old woman, who belonged to the family of Bou-aziz, came to my relief.

"It is the lion," she said, (tearing off from her head the few straggling hairs which time had forgotten,) "and you see how he uses us,—that Jew, that pagan, that cousin of the devil!"

This was enough to account for every thing I had seen and heard; I could comprehend all, except the armed men running about hither and thither. The old woman then explained to me that part of the oxen had burst through the hedge in their flight from the lion, while the rest of the herd had taken refuge under the tents; adding that the men were busy collecting the wandering animals in order to replace them in the enclosure. Bou-aziz in fact returned immediately, driving some oxen before him, and by degrees the park was filled up as before,—minus a fine bull, on which, no doubt, the lion was at that moment making a hearty breakfast; I say breakfast, because order was scarcely restored when daylight began to dawn.

Bou-aziz, when I reproached him for not giving me notice of the lion's invasion, gave me to understand that it would have been dangerous for the inhabitants of the douar to attack him within its precincts, and he thereupon told me the following anecdote, relating to an event which had taken place about a year before:

"A lion, well known in the country by the name of *El Ahor* (so called because he was blind of one eye), having settled himself on a douar, which he had almost entirely depopulated and ruined, an Arab, exasperated by the enormous losses he had personally sustained, resolved to close his account with him once for all: it was, in the words of Bou-aziz, a foolish resolve, and therefore the unfortunate man took great care not to mention it to any one.

"As the lion seemed to laugh at all the precautions

they took to guard themselves,—the fires they lighted up,—the talismans written by the marabouts most in renown; and as whenever they went to change their encampment he persisted in following them, the inhabitants had at last mournfully resigned themselves to their fate.

“One fine evening, however, this Arab seized his gun stealthily and sat himself down close to the hedge, which served as an enclosure, precisely at the spot where the lion was accustomed to leap over in the night. Towards midnight the dogs gave the alarm, on hearing the screech of the jackal, who generally follows the lion to eat the remnants of his meal, upon which the Arab cocked his gun and stood on the watch. In about a quarter of an hour after, the lion cleared the hedge and landed at three paces from him; a shot was heard, and the lion, notwithstanding a broken shoulder, made one bound on the Arab and tore him to threads in a second; then he rushed on the nearest tent and killed all those who were in it, with the exception of a woman, who, at the moment he was going to seize her, managed to escape, carrying her child in her arms.

“Furious at seeing this last victim eluding his vengeance, the lion sprang after her. The unfortunate creature perceiving that she was on the point of being seized, sought refuge on the top of the neighbouring tent, hoping that the enemy, already severely wounded, might prefer penetrating into the interior, where the inmates were loudly screaming with terror. The lion, however, determining not to be balked, caught her by the legs at the very moment she was reaching the top, while, at the same instant, the weight of his body and the tremendous shaking brought the tent crushed and broken to the ground.

“The lion hearing the screams of distress, and feeling the living creatures struggling under him, hastened to give up the woman and child already dead and mutilated, and going over every inch of the tent’s covering, tore with his claws and teeth through the very canvass all those who gave any sign of life. To complete the measure of misfortunes, the fire, which had not been properly put out, caught hold of the carpets and clothes, and the whole family perished by fire or by the lion’s jaws, without

a chance of help or rescue, every other inhabitant of the douar having taken the opportunity of this incident to escape.

"Next morning at dawn of day forty men well armed entered with every precaution the precincts of the douar. The lion had disappeared, satisfied with having proved to the sons of Adam that no strength could equal his strength, and that their property was his property."

"And this lion," said I to Bou-aziz, "do you know what has become of him?"

"This lion," he replied, "has recovered from his wound, only he is lame. He has been seen many times, and is called *El Haïb*, the cripple, and *Bou-acherin-Radjel*, the slayer of twenty men."

I could easily understand after this recital why the lion was no longer disturbed in his nocturnal incursions, the whole population having been terror-struck and utterly disheartened; and I clearly perceived, too, the reason why mine host had not given me notice of his approach.

Wishing particularly to know what had become of the missing bull, I set off to seek for it in company with Bou-aziz and several Arabs of the douar, among whom was the proprietor of the animal; nor were we long in finding him. He lay at a distance of a musket-shot; the lion had devoured a whole leg and a shoulder, a weight of upwards of forty pounds. The master of the bull, after walking twice or thrice round his beast, all the while muttering to himself, came up to me and said:

"It is the tenth he has taken from me since the spring; I have still forty left; I will give you the half of them with all my heart, if you can only rid us of this savage. I only ask one thing, and that is to be informed among the first, in order that I may have the satisfaction of tearing off his accursed beard!"

The Arabs who were present, thinking that this bribe might encourage me, made their offers likewise; each in proportion to the cattle he possessed, and the losses he had sustained. One only remonstrated, saying he considered my enterprise as sheer madness, nor could he

conceive how Bou-aziz, who was a man of sense, could encourage such an extravagance.

Bou-aziz answered in a way which hardly pleased me; for instead of taking the thing seriously as I expected, he only replied, smiling in a strange fashion, "*Achkoun yarf?*" Who knows? There was in that smile and in that "Who knows?" something which clearly meant, "What blockheads you must be, since you do not perceive that I care still less than you do if this man should get himself disposed of. If perchance he succeeds, we shall profit by it; if he loses his skin in the attempt, it will only be, after all, one Christian dog the less in the world, and we will rejoice at it together."

I returned to the douar, much chagrined at having made such a mistake about the good disposition of my host with respect to me.

That day I received a visit from two or three hundred Arabs, and we held in broad sunshine a sort of court-martial, in which the lion's affairs were discussed and settled. The *accused absent* had neither friend nor witness present to exonerate or excuse him; on the contrary, he was run down on all sides; and it is but fair to say that it would have been difficult indeed to have found in his favour the least extenuating circumstance, so dire and extended was the awful list of his misdeeds. In this way there were of course no speeches *pro* and *con*, and the debates between the members of the jury consisted only in deciding which should be the one who, having most suffered, should enjoy the privilege of tearing off the miscreant's beard.

This discussion interested me highly, and gave me the idea of drawing up a statistical account of the losses which the lion inflicts on the Arabs.

After studying the case with particular attention, I came to the conclusion, that in the districts frequented by the king of beasts, the extra tax he raises on the tribes is ten times heavier than the tribute they pay to government; that he kills or consumes a value of five hundred francs (20*l.*) per month in cattle of all sorts, of six thousand francs (240*l.*) in the course of the year, and of

more than two hundred thousand francs (8000*l.*) during the whole extent of his existence, his life having upon an average a length of from thirty to forty years.

Each man having reckoned up his losses, several accounts were equally balanced, which rendered the solution rather difficult. At last, an old man all in rags came forward, and leaning his elbow on a long walking-stick which he carried with him, exclaimed, "To me belongs the lion's beard! to me, who have lost every thing! to me, who have nothing left now but this tattered burnous, which a very beggar would refuse to wear!" And, so saying, he exposed to the eyes of the company the most wretched state of nakedness and misery I had ever seen.

As the Arabs were turning into ridicule this unfortunate old man, because he had lost but a few heads of cattle, which however were all he possessed, I rose in my turn, and said to him, "To you shall belong the lion's beard; to you will I give it, if it please God that I should kill him."

The old man came up to me as quick as his old legs would permit him; and before I could prevent him, he began kissing my head, my cheeks, my shoulders, and my hands, saying, "You will kill him, my son, you will kill him!" Then leaning over me, he whispered in my ear, "You are a Roumi, but I don't care; if you can kill the lion, I will give you my daughter, and if you like, I will adopt you for my own son."

I was at first surprised at this strange and offhand proposition, so contrary to all the habits and principles of the Mussulmans; and if later I have laughed at it, considering the brilliant position the poor fellow thought he was offering to me, I nevertheless concluded that I had taken the right way, and that the hatred of the Arabs would fall, together with my first lion.

This scene with the old man made me forget the "Who knows?" of Bou-aziz, and I resolved that ere long the latter should himself entertain quite different feelings towards me.

Time, however, was getting on, and the sun was now sinking in the horizon: I was therefore eager to act without delay, having only obtained a three days' leave of

absence. I told Bou-aziz to prepare for starting, and with the exception of a few kind souls who endeavoured to persuade me that I had much better return to Guelma, the rest of the Arabs seemed very glad to see us take our weapons, and march off towards the forest.

As the natives who possess a horse cannot understand how any one can go on foot when he can ride, my companion asked me if I would have my horse. I refused, however, convinced that he would only be in my way instead of being useful.

After following for about an hour a path which ran through the wood, we came to a high ridge which commanded a view of the whole country, and led to another path. Bou-aziz told me that this spot was frequented by the lion, and that from the point on which we stood we might easily hear him roar.

As he used the plural number *we*, I declared to him at once that in accepting him as a guide, I fully expected him to remain totally passive, as I desired no assistance whatever in my enterprise. Thereupon he assured me that such was his intention, and that when the moment came, he would allow me to do my work without troubling me in the least.

These preliminaries once settled, I loaded my gun with deliberation, and we sat down on a rock sufficiently high to enable us to see all the different places frequented by the lion, without getting away from the favoured spot.

Night came on, and we had seen nothing but the wild boars rooting up the ground in the glades, the jackals going about seeking prey, and the hares nibbling off the sprigs and short grass at the foot of our rock. Bou-aziz had expected that at night we should return to the douar, and was at first much astonished when I expressed my intention of remaining there till the next day. He took the thing, however, pretty well, and after leaving me alone for two or three hours, he returned with two Arabs who brought us our supper.

I felt that here was a difficulty which must be settled, and I told Bou-aziz, that once for all he was never to trouble himself about my food, but that every day before

starting we should take in the hood of our burnous a cake and a handful of dates, a provision which appeared to me quite sufficient. As for drink, we had the streams and fountains in which the lion himself quenched his thirst.

The men who had brought the couscoussou, not daring to go back, as they had come unarmed, we were obliged to keep them with us until morning, which arrived without our having seen or heard any thing of the lion.

The whole day was given up to repose, and the evening found us at our post of the previous day, Bou-aziz and I; Bou-aziz a degree more confident, I a degree more reserved.

When night closed in, my companion told me that we should have more chance of meeting the lion by beating up the roads than by remaining at the same place, so we started, following a path which descended into the valley. The sky was calm and pure, the moon beautiful and clear, the atmosphere sweet and mild, the weather delightful; altogether it was the very best moment one could choose for a walk. The path being too narrow to march two abreast, I followed my guide, step by step, admiring the beauty of the sky, and the effects of the moonlight on the trees and rocks.

All of a sudden Bou-aziz turned round abruptly, and seizing me by the arm, without a word, pulled me along with him fifty paces under the brushwood. There he squatted down and obliged me to do the same by pulling with all his might the skirts of my burnous.

Perceiving that I was about to ask an explanation: "Hush!" he mysteriously whispered, with a rather alarmed air, "not a word, not a movement, or we are lost." "What!" said I impatiently and in a loud voice, without caring for his gestures, "What's the matter! We were walking on the lion's path in the hope of meeting him, and you drag me out of that path to hide me here! . . . what is the meaning of all this?"

"It is a *saga*" (a fog), said he; "hold your tongue, or we are both dead."

I was utterly bamboozled by this answer, which to me

was incomprehensible. My first impression was, that Bou-aziz had caught sight of the lion, and was afraid that some cloud should cover the moon at the moment we should meet him, which of course would have proved dangerous. But the moon was there right over our heads, lighting up the whole forest with her silvery rays, and as far as my eye could reach, I saw nothing but stars shining every where.

"Here he comes," whispered my companion; "he has heard us, and is looking for us."

"Cock your gun without any noise," I replied, "and do not move until he finds us out."

I then distinctly perceived the sound of several voices muttering, and the noise of the burnous brushing past the bushes.

"But these are men," said I to Bou-aziz, close to his ear.

"Yes, it is a band of marauders."

Judging by the noise they made they were at least a dozen. I had two shots to fire, Bou-aziz one only; and in spite of my dagger and my sword, it seemed difficult to get safely out of this scrape without a bold stroke of some kind.

I cocked both barrels of my gun, made sure of my other weapons coming easily out of the scabbard, then I rose, saying to Bou-aziz, "Come, follow me, and let us fall upon these ruffians."

He was up almost as soon as me, and, throwing the skirts of his burnous over his shoulder, he roared out: "Ah! sons of dogs, you don't know what men are? Wait a little, and you shall have a lesson."

These words were no sooner out of his mouth, than loud peals of laughter issued from every bush, and we heard Bou-aziz's name and mine repeated on all sides.

"They are my cousins," said he, laughing in his turn; "they were, no doubt, taking a walk, and on seeing us wished to have a joke. Come, they may give us some news of the lion."

Every moment seemed to create a new surprise, and the reader will confess, that this was certainly a very fit

matter for serious reflection. Were these fellows really taking only an ordinary walk, or were they not rather a band of regular assassins?

To complete my astonishment, when I found myself in the midst of these men who had just been hunting us like real game, I recognized, armed to the teeth, several of the guests with whom I had made such a bad dinner on the day of my arrival at Bou-aziz's, and along with them his own brother.

After a good deal of laughing on the mistake which had taken place, they told us that they had heard the douars situated on the Oued-bou-sousa make a great noise, and that the lion, no doubt, had passed his night with them.

I asked Bou-aziz to take me thither; but, either because he did not like it, or because the distance was in truth too great, he declined, assuring me that we should arrive too late. I then proposed that we should wait for the lion as he returned; to which he agreed.

The fog,—which in Arabic is called *saga*, and means sometimes our fog, an inoffensive vapour, sometimes a troop of armed men;—the fog, I say, did us the honour to accompany us to the skirts of the wood, and there left us to continue its nocturnal ramble.

As we had nothing to do but to wait patiently until daylight, with our eyes attentively bent on the plain, I interrogated my companion on the adventure we had just met with, and the following is what he told me, on condition, however, I should only make use of it for my own protection, and that otherwise I should keep it to myself.

As I have, since that time, seen all those things over and over again with my own eyes, I do not think myself indiscreet in revealing them here, and perhaps it may be useful to persons travelling through or inhabiting the interior of French Africa. One thing is certain, that this information may be of great use to the officers employed in Arabian affairs, and to the representatives of the civil authority in Algeria.

My companion's explanation was thus introduced:—

“In your nation,” said Bou-aziz, “you love equally the new-born infant, let him be male or female.”

The reader will excuse me, but such were my companion's expressions.

"With the Arabs, there is more rejoicing for the birth of a colt than for that of a girl, whilst a male never comes into this world without powder being burnt in his honour. On him rest the hopes of the father, of the family, of the douar, of the tribe; he is expected to be brave and strong, and, if those qualities are not very soon revealed, he finds himself an object of contempt for all, even for his own father.

"With you, the women gaze more particularly on those who are *pretty*. Our women, on the contrary, compare the *pretty* man to a female, and the *strong* man to the lion."

I here observed to Bou-aziz that these two qualities might happen to be united in the same individual, particularly among the Arabs, whose race is generally handsome; and I asked him if an Arabian woman could form an attachment for a man infirm, lame, deformed, or mutilated, but at the same time extremely brave.

His reply appeared to me to comprise a good deal of sound philosophy.

"Deformity," said he, "cannot be a cause of repulsion for a woman, if it be the consequence of some encounter in which the man has proved what he is worth. If it be natural, she will look down upon him who is afflicted by it, because she well knows that God when He created a deformed being, never meant to create a man."

Thus, among the Arabs, the wretch who comes into this world crippled or deformed, does not strive to palliate the faults of nature by qualities which he is never supposed to be capable of possessing; and he forms a sort of particular species, taking rank between man and beast. Fortunately, however, for that unhappy class of beings, it is far from being so numerous as it is with us.

During twelve years' residence in Africa, I have met with only one Arab hump-backed; he was taken about from tribe to tribe, as some curious animal, to the immense delight of all the children, who showered upon him jokes and dates.

"You may conceive," continued Bou-aziz, "that our male

children, when they become adults, make every endeavour to conquer the esteem of men ; and that of women, which is still more difficult to obtain. For, let me tell you, among us women are never mistaken about a man's character ; and it is they who raise or crush him by their judgment and opinion.

“Formerly, when the tribes fought between themselves, or against you, it was easy enough for our young men to show their worth ; but since our guns have been consigned again to their cases, what are they to do ? There are to be sure the family feuds, which at times procure some of them a chance of proving that they are men, by creeping through the dark night, in spite of all the dogs and eyes on the watch, under their enemy's tent, and putting a bullet through his brains ; a sort of thing much more difficult to accomplish, and which requires much more courage than your duels in broad daylight.

“But every one has not the blood of a father, of a brother, or some near relation, to revenge ; and there is nothing left for a man to prove that he really deserves the name, but love adventures, or deeds of plunder.

“As the brave man may be ever sure of the wife who is proud of him ; so he who has done nothing to prove what he is worth, is reputed to be worth nothing at all ; and his wife will take a peculiar satisfaction in outwitting him. In acting thus, the wife does not think she does wrong, nor does public opinion accuse her.

“After being married by her parents to a man whom she did not know, she has no sooner found out that he is a coward, than she thinks of getting rid of him.

“It sometimes happens that the wife herself will accept the charge of destroying her husband, and will knock him on the head during his sleep, or destroy him with poison.”

But here I must stop, for I already hear the reader exclaim, “And the law,—what is the law about in a country where killing and poisoning are thus carried on daily ?”

The law is this : When a man is murdered by the dagger, by fire, or by poison, the accused is brought

before a court-martial, which condemns him to death or to hard labour. Or, he may be allowed to pay the price of blood, called *dyah* by the Arabs, and which is a thousand francs (40*l.*) for a man, and five hundred francs for a woman, thus murdered. A fine representing one half of the *dyah* is besides imposed upon him who is found guilty.

The murderer is brought before the court-martial only when the affair has been duly reported and investigated by the Arabian office, and when sufficient proofs have been found to ensure a condemnation. Should the proofs not be found clear enough, the parents of the dead man accept the price of blood, and thereby relinquish all intention of revenge.

As it often happens, however, that a man is killed without its being possible to discover, or even to suspect his murderer, the whole tribe is then responsible for the crime, and pays the fine and the *dyah*.

This measure, generally adopted throughout Algeria, has produced excellent results, especially for the security of travellers. It has, moreover, brought about the discovery of many a murder, the authors of which would otherwise have remained unknown, and therefore unpunished.

What I have just said about the law in force against assassination only concerns the tribes established on the territory subject to military authority. Our civil tribunals apply the French laws to the natives placed under their jurisdiction, but their circle is so limited as yet, that I consider it useless to mention them except as a term of comparison.

Here it may be asked, Is it preferable to keep up among the Arabs the application of the law which we found in vigour among them, or to introduce the law used in our own country? This is a serious and delicate question, the solution of which may be of a great weight in the moral conquest of Algeria. But there are so many things to say on this important subject, that I should be afraid to weary the reader's patience by insisting any longer upon it. I will, therefore, abandon this semi-political question to those whom it more particularly

concerns, but not without saying a few words on another point which appears to me of great importance.

I refer to the difficulties which must necessarily attend in Algeria the repression of crimes, and offences against person and property.

And, indeed, in the midst of a wandering population, who change their habitation as we change our coats, how is it possible to conduct successfully and rapidly a criminal cause, when the origin and conclusion of the affair have taken place amongst people whose habits, customs, and language, are so very little known to us?

Government should strictly require from the public functionaries intrusted with important duties in Algeria, an exact knowledge of the language, and a serious study of the habits, customs, and manners of the Arab, at home, and under his tent; and this measure ought to be extended particularly to the civil and military functionaries, who by their positions are chiefly called upon to serve as a medium between the superior authority and the surrounding populations. I ought to add, however, that in those two branches of administration, we possess men, who after a long residence in Africa, and deep study, have already acquired so much, that they have indeed very little left to learn.

After this digression, I return to Bou-aziz and the *fog*, about which he had not yet given me the promised explanation.

"When our young men," he continued, "have in view neither death nor marriage, they form a fog and march out seeking adventures."

"But yet," I asked, "where after all do they go?—Where were your brother and his cousins going this evening, for instance?"

"My brother and my cousins?—Well, I cannot exactly tell where they were going, but the fact is they seldom come home empty-handed."

After a good deal of shuffling and hesitation, I found out at last that the young men who thus marched out at night seeking adventures were simply robbers and assassins;—robbers, because they carried off by stealth, and sometimes by force, the cattle of the douars which they

passed on their road; and assassins, because they killed not only those who defended their property, but also their own equals whenever they came across their path. In short, according to the account of Bou-aziz, an Arab who had not killed at least one man in his life, enjoyed no consideration whatever.

Once upon this ground, my companion felt quite at home, and at length confided to me a part of his own history; viz. that after losing all his flocks in a razzia, he had recruited his fortune by pillaging right and left, and sometimes by killing.

In the meantime the day was beginning to dawn, and no lion appeared.

Oh! ye, my brother hunters, why were you not there with me, placed along the skirts of this forest, into which I could see animals and game of every description returning, after passing their night in the plain? From the dawn until the actual rising of the sun it was one continual and tranquil procession, as if man, that inveterate enemy of all animals, had never existed.

Bou-aziz, accustomed to this sight, paid not the smallest attention to it; only on perceiving the wild boars enter the wood without fear, he foretold that the lion would not come. As soon as the sun showed his red disk in the horizon we rose to return to the douar.

After I had taken a few hours' rest, I expressed a desire to visit the resorts of the lion, partly in hopes of meeting him, and partly in order to get thoroughly acquainted with the private habits of the monarch. Bou-aziz, after much trouble, consented to accompany me with a dozen of his men.

To see these Arabs make their preparations one would have thought they were going out to battle, which made me suspect that the lion's abode, notwithstanding the absence of guards, is not one of those which are easily approached.

It may be interesting to the reader to have a short description of what the natives call their fighting-gear.

You know—or you know not—that the Arab's full dress is composed of a long shirt descending far below

the knee, without any collar, and with very broad sleeves. Over this a haïk, made of wool or silk, envelops the waist, chest, and head, which it covers with its numerous folds, and upon which it is made fast by a camel's-hair rope, white or brown, making from five to ten rounds. Above all this are placed two or three burnous, which complete the national dress. The shoes, which are by no means considered necessary, only cover the sole and sides of the foot of the pedestrian; the horseman wears a sort of red maroquin boot, called *themaques*.

When an Arab prepares for some excursion or adventure in which he may have to fight on foot, he forthwith pulls off his shoes, or boots if he has such; he then strips himself of the burnous, which might impede his movements; of his haïk, which might be torn; and of the camel's rope, with which he might be strangled. All he retains is a red cap to protect his head, and his shirt, which he tucks up above the knee by means of a leather belt strapped round his waist;—the shirt-sleeves, which might be troublesome on account of their great breadth, being gathered over the shoulders and tied behind the back. If you add to all this a cartridge-box suspended on one side, a yatagan on the other, one or two pistols slung behind the back, and a gun six feet long carried in the hand, you will have a tolerable idea of the fighting-gear in use among the native Algerians.

There is, however, another kind of accoutrement;—that of the professional robber, who pursues his calling either singly or with only one companion. These gentlemen, with a view to appear more inoffensive in case of surprise, leave their guns at home, and fix round their bodies, below their shirts, a complete little arsenal, not the less dangerous because it is invisible.

It was then in the middle of a dozen of fellows thus equipped that I arrived near one of the lion's resorts. Here I expected to find rocks, dens, and caverns; instead of which I saw nothing but trees all around. And yet, on comparing this spot, generally called the lion's garden, with the other parts of the forest, I easily conceived why the lord and master of all around had selected it for his abode.

It was a magnificent cluster of wild olive-trees, planted so very close as to seem to spring from one and the same root, the foliage of which, with its dark tinge, contrasted well with the light green of the forest, and spread over the whole cluster of wood a certain sombre aspect which inspired feelings of awe.

Up to this time my companions had kept close around me, but on reaching the skirts of the trees they held back. Three of them were altogether missing, and had preferred exposing themselves to the gibes of their companions, rather than run the chance of incurring the lion's displeasure.

The countenances of those who remained were considerably abashed, and their attitude more than doubtful; but I cared little for this, having resolved, to say the truth, to depend solely upon myself. Nevertheless, as I advanced, not without difficulty, under this obscure vault, the ground of which was covered with the lion's spoor, my heart began to beat louder and quicker. Every moment too I was stopped by some hand pulling me, now by an arm, now by a leg, while at the same time I was addressed by some quaking voice, saying, "Go slowly, take care of yourself;" and whenever I happened to look round, I beheld a set of faces convulsed with terror. I confess that I wished my guides far enough off, and was delighted to find a small glade where I could command them to halt.

The grass of the glade in which we now were was levelled and crushed in several places by the fresh spoor of the lion. It was there, in fact, that on leaving his private apartments he came to dress and clean himself, as the cats do, and await the evening twilight, before announcing to the douars of the plain that he meant to descend and pay them a visit.

I had much trouble in persuading the Arabs to remain in this place, and had it not been for shame, I am convinced they would have retraced their steps, and gone home immediately. Bon-aziz, however, particularly insisted upon remaining, and as he spoke in a way which convinced me that it was not a matter of mere words, I consented to proceed with him.

Not far from the glade, and still under the dark arch formed by the olive-trees, I found some dozen chambers, which the lion had arranged for himself, so as to occupy sometimes one, sometimes another, according to his fancy. Every sort of herb, root, or leaves were carefully brushed away, and so was the smallest stone which might have prevented his lordship from slumbering at his ease. The space between these various chambers was covered with the bark of trees, which the lion had torn off as a pastime, or in order to sharpen his claws.

While I was carefully examining every interior detail of the palace of this shaggy monarch, my attention was attracted by a noise of crackling branches, and a sort of rumbling sound; a pretty good intimation that the lion's roar was just about to begin. My companion had come close to me, asking me if I had heard any thing, and adding in a pitiful and ludicrous tone, "The master perhaps will not be much pleased to find us here in his own dwelling, like a set of thieves!"

"No matter," said I; "pleased or not, let him only make his appearance."

"We shall soon see," he replied with a deep sigh, and creeping still closer to me.

Meantime the branches kept on crackling, and the noise seemed gradually to approach us. All of a sudden I saw Bou-aziz lean one ear on the ground, as if to listen, and then jump up almost immediately, with satisfaction depicted on his countenance.

"It is not the lion," he said, laughing, "but the fire our friends have lighted by way of precaution, in the neighbouring glade."

Indeed the flames soon invaded the whole precincts, and in a little while we might have been roasted alive through the folly of those cowards, who had decamped without even warning us of what they had done.

As it was too late to go and visit other resorts, we waited for nightfall near a fountain, where the lion was accustomed to drink. Finding that by midnight he had not yet appeared, we then repaired to the plain, where the Arabs and the dogs of the douars were assembled.

The moment we reached the edge of the wood the

report of a gun was heard, and several balls whizzed past us. This we found proceeded from the tent of the guard of the pits for preserving grain, at the entrance of the wood, who had taken us for robbers; and, as if this shot had been a signal, it was repeated by every douar in the plain, no doubt to show that they were not asleep.

This night passed like the preceding ones, without any other incident than the one I have just mentioned.

Next morning I did not lie down as usual, but mounted my horse to return to the camp, where my very first care was to solicit fresh leave of absence, a little more protracted than the first.

I had a good deal of difficulty in obtaining it, on account of my last excursion having produced no result that could fairly warrant a second absence. Eventually, however, I succeeded, and after two or three days' rest, I started again with Bou-aziz, who was now full of confidence, and repeated to all who cared to hear him, that the lion was decidedly afraid of me, since he did not venture to roar any more.

When we passed along before the douars, groups of Arabs rushed out at full speed, entreating that I would tarry a moment to listen to the recital of the lion's misdeeds during the last few days.

To hear those people talk, as well as those who received us in the evening, we had but to march out to find ourselves in the very presence of the enemy. The day before, we were told, he had roared before sunset, and had actually come to drink at a fountain situated within gunshot of the douar, putting to flight the women who were employed in drawing water.

At five o'clock we arrived near the spot where the lion had roared on the previous evening; but the sun went down, and night closed in without our having the good fortune to hear him. This made Bou-aziz repeat afresh, "that certainly God had gifted me with the power of intimidating the lion, and that I should assuredly kill him like a dog at the very first encounter!"

The whole night was passed in marches and counter-marches which brought neither incident nor result, after

which we returned at dawn of day to the tent where we had left our horses.

I now for the first time perceived some signs of respect towards me among the Arabs. Among other tokens the master of the tent seeing that I was disposed to rest, turned out all the other inmates, and took every precaution to prevent my sleep being interrupted.

I should certainly have wished these attentions to be the consequence of gratitude justified by deeds actually accomplished; but since these people decidedly believed me to be gifted with a supernatural power, I concluded that after all, if the end warranted their belief, I could not take to myself all the honour of the success, but that I should be bound also to believe, not so much in my own power to intimidate the lion, as in a mysterious Protection, without which one is but halfway up to the mark in circumstances of real difficulty.

On awaking I saw around me a crowd of Arabs, all squatted down and in perfect silence. They had in fact entered and seated themselves so quietly and with so many precautions for fear of awaking me, that I had not heard the slightest sound. The moment I sat upright one of them stepped forward with a most melancholy look, and began screaming at the top of his voice :

“Chera Allah ! chera Allah !” justice of God ! justice of God ! and thirty voices in the group repeated in the same note, *“chera Allah ! chera Allah !”*

“Come, come, explain yourself !” cried I, annoyed by this unmusical concert, “and tell me at once what brings you here.”

They all stopped at one time ; and the fellow who had first advanced spoke as follows :

“In the name of God listen to me ;—listen to the complaint I bring before you, and render me justice if you find that right is on my side.

“I had a mare for which I had been offered ten female camels ; I refused them, because I loved that mare like my own eyes. Yesterday I took her to the river in the afternoon to bathe her. Coming out of the water, I placed her in the shade on the skirts of the wood at fifty

paces from the rivulet, to which I returned to perform my ablutions and say my prayers.

"I thought I heard my mare rolling herself about, but as it was her habit I paid no attention to it, thinking that I should only have the trouble to wash her over again. But just as I was preparing to climb the bank I heard a trampling over me, and as the steps were heavy, I supposed it must be my mare.

"Raising my head I saw—my blood freezes, and my heart trembles only to think of it—I saw the lion staring at me, laughing.

"*'My mare!'* I screamed out to him, while at the same time I dashed water into his face, which seemed to amuse him. Perceiving then that he was actually making a fool of me, and forgetful of all personal fear, I began to pick up stones and throw them at him. Upon this he quietly lay down to show me how little he cared about my displeasure.

"I then lost all command of myself, and hastening a little lower down the stream, I ran madly along the bank. My first look was for my poor mare: she was stretched lifeless under a tree amidst a pool of blood, and when I attempted to go near her, the lion, who followed me with his eyes, rose and sprang furiously towards me, roaring like thunder.

"I was fortunately close to the rivulet; and making one bound I dived into the very deepest part. On coming to the surface of the water again I saw the lion stretched on the bank drinking away, but without losing sight of me for a moment.

"*'May that water poison you, you pagan and son of a pagan,'* said I to him, making for the other bank; *'and may you burst before filling your greedy stomach with my precious property.'*

"The lion paid not the slightest attention to my words, nor did he condescend to move when I got out of the water; and as long as I could see him while I was running away at full speed, he was still quietly drinking on. The monster's stomach is truly a sea, a regular sea, capable of drying up our rivers, and of swallowing down all the Mussulmans with their flocks and cattle.

"See, then," concluded the man, "if my complaint is not well-founded, and if I have not a right to come and demand justice."

"*Chera Allah! chera Allah!*" repeated his companions; "we have no longer rest, nor sleep, nor any more security. It will be enough for you to come to us to make him disappear; and what he used to devour we will give to you, so that peace may remain with us."

"It was evident from this, that the notion of the intimidation I was supposed to exercise over the lion, had begun to spread every where. I tried to make these good people understand that, if the lion had not roared during the previous nights when I was pursuing him, it was a pure matter of caprice; and that if he returned after my departure, it was only because he chose to do so. But what power can the most clear and palpable truth exert against superstition, among people so ignorant and so credulous as the Arabs? All my reasoning could not shake their conviction; and at last a *savant* who happened to be present, and whom I recognized as such by his pure and correct diction, by the beads he was rolling through his clean white fingers, and by his important air, said to me:

"A long time past, they spoke to us about a Roman who professed to be able to kill the lion; and they talked to us about his night-watches in the neighbourhood of Guelma. As long as he remained far from us, and acted like the Arabs, we laughed at him:—pardon us this momentary doubt. It was because we know both lion and man; we know that the prophet said, 'God has given to man the strength of a man, and to the lion the strength of forty men, that he may keep the latter in mind, lest they should happen to forget it, that *all comes from God and returns to God.*' Later, when we heard that this Roman was amongst us, seeking the lion without any watch-hole, without shelter, and *eye against eye*, we considered him a dead man; and we feared that his brethren should make us pay dear for the price of his blood. Then we went and consulted a marabout who knows all, and this marabout said to us, 'God is great, and can do all He pleases. This man you speak of is not a *Roman*, but a servant of

God; and since he seeks the lion *eye against eye*, it shows that his heart is of steel, and his glance of fire. God made him such to bend the heads of the proud men, who believe *that their strength is in themselves*.

“‘The lion will flee from the presence of this man, as you flee from the presence of the lion; but, let him do what he will, he will die by his *fortunate* hand, and he *will not be his only victim*. Seek that man, he will bring you peace; kiss his hand, it will protect you; load him with presents, you will gain by it; and thank God for sending you a deliverer, whom He has chosen from the midst of the worlds. Amen.’

“Thus spoke the marabout; and you have given a sanction to his words in putting to flight the lion by your very presence.

“But we are all the sons of Adam; and it would not be just that one tribe alone should enjoy the blessings of peace, while the others are suffering and come to claim your assistance. Be pleased, therefore, to come with us to our douar, where every one, great and small, old and young, are awaiting you; for they said to us as we were departing, ‘Above all things return not without him.’”

“I will accompany you,” said I, rising; “the only thing I ask of you is to let me see the lion before eight days, which is the term fixed for my return to the camp.”

They promised me wonders as the result of my expedition, and I set off once more with a heart full of hope and confidence. The country I was going to explore was that of El-archioua, situated between two rivers, the Oued-bou-sousa and the Oued-aliah, the general aspect of which was similar to that already described.

On my arrival I was received with open arms, and the reins of my horse were literally torn from my hands by a noisy and eager multitude of people contending for the honour, or rather the advantage, of possessing me. I naturally gave the preference to the Arab whose mare the lion had devoured.

But if these men were full of joy and enthusiasm, such such was not the case with my host's wives, nor with their neighbours, who, under a thousand pretences, came

to look at me through the tent. Indeed, more than once my attentive ear was most disagreeably annoyed by the epithet of *Roumi*, which I hoped had been laid aside for ever.

If it happened that some of these ladies said compassionately among themselves, "Poor young man, they will have him devoured!" others took no trouble to disguise their displeasure at the presence of a *Nazarene* among them. This obstinate aversion of the women ought to have been a matter of indifference to me, since I had in my favour the good opinion of the men; but yet I would gladly have seen them less hostile to me, and less prejudiced against my nation and my religion.

Convinced that, when through my means they should be able to *see* and *touch* with impunity the lion,—that enemy who was still more terrible to them than to the men, their feelings towards me would speedily alter, I resolved to hasten that moment as much as possible.

I therefore declared to Bou-aziz that my intention was to start in an hour, and to spend in the forest the whole seven days which still remained, unless some fortunate encounter should terminate the expedition sooner. As my companion was very anxious about the manner in which we should live in the forest, I observed to him that there was no lack of douars on its skirts; and that if the cake seemed to him rather too dry, he should be quite at liberty to go and take his meals there every day. This observation seemed to give him much pleasure, and he prepared to follow me in company with my host.

I here witnessed a somewhat curious domestic scene between the latter and the women, all of whom were strongly opposed to his joining our party.

At the moment when, seated before me, he was gravely drawing his gun out of its sheath, one of his wives sprang like a panther from the room reserved to the women, and before he could even suspect what had made her so far forget the most sacred customs of his country, she had disappeared again, carrying off the gun which she had suddenly plucked out of his hands.

The husband glanced at me to see what I thought of this sally; but I pretended to have seen nothing and

went on with my preparations. He then got up, and raising the drapery which separated the two apartments, entered the women's room, where a sharp dialogue soon took place between them.

The husband would have back his gun; but the little woman was firm, and refused, saying, "Are you mad? If that *dog of a Christian*, who has neither wife, nor mother, nor family, chooses to get himself devoured, well and good; but you—you shall not go." (I should add here, that the Arabs who do not frequent our towns, generally believe that the French who come to their country are a set of wandering wretches without home or family.)

"But you know he is going to revenge me," said the husband, "by shooting the lion who destroyed my darling mare."

"Ah! his darling mare!" repeated several of the women; "his darling mare! Very true; he is right in wishing to avenge her; since he loved her better than us, better than his children, and since he has lost every thing in losing her."

"Will ye be silent, ye daughters of hounds!" cried the man in a passion, "and let me depart in peace?"

"Well! be off with you," cried all the women in a chorus, "and may the lion know you again!"

Three or four heavy blows,—a correction more efficacious than words,—were the husband's sole reply, and he reappeared in the room where I was waiting for him, holding his gun in one hand, and a stout cudgel in the other. The measure certainly proved successful; for, up to the moment when we left the tent, I heard nothing in the side chamber but whisperings and smothered tears.

In an hour we were in the open forest, waiting for the time when it might please the lion to appear. The night had closed in, and we were about to begin beating up the roads which skirted the wood, when we were suddenly stopped by a distant roar.

"It comes from Bou-sousa," said Bou-aziz, "in the very district where we watched for him yesterday."

It was two hours' walk thither from the point at which we stood, and I immediately informed my companions

that it was my intention to proceed thither, with them or without them. They observed that we should have two rivers to cross on our way, but on my replying that there was no difficulty on that account, as they would have nothing to do but to lift up their shirts, they acquiesced, and we started off at once, at a round pace!

On reaching the first ford, my guides offered their services to pull off my heavy boots and trousers. I thanked them for their attention, but showed them the way across by stepping before them into the water, which, at the deepest part, reached up to my armpits.

"That devil of a man," said the proprietor of the mare, as he was getting out of the river at the opposite side, "is in a fair way to drown us to-night like dogs."

"Your wives were right in wishing to keep you," said Bou-aziz laughing; "and you will find that after this campaign of six or seven nights by starlight, you will weigh twenty good pounds less."

"I care little about that," replied the other, "provided I have the satisfaction of seeing the lion expire before me, and touching his dead carcass."

This conversation in the water was interrupted by an incident singular enough to be related here.

In coming out of the river, I had taken the lead of our little party, and was walking on straight before me, examining attentively every object of a suspicious form, and listening at the same time to my people's conversation. For a moment, my eyes had been fixed on a thick tree planted on our path, when all of a sudden, it seemed to me that this tree was moving to the right. At first, I thought that it must be a mistake, and that it must be I who was leaning to the left; but very soon all doubt became impossible—the tree had vanished.

I stopped to inform Bou-aziz of what I had seen.

"Again some night-rovers," said he; "let us rush on these dogs!" (It was thus he styled men fashioned after his own model.)

In one minute we were on the spot where the tree had disappeared, and we found it stretched on the ground; it was a fine lentisc, about three yards high, and adorned from top to bottom with thick branches.

Whilst I was marching round the tree, searching the plain on all sides to discover the being who made it walk but a minute ago, the tree rose up by itself, and two men issued from its branches, saying placidly:

"Brethren, salvation be with you!"

These fellows were stark naked, and unarmed.

"Do you know them?" said I to Bou-aziz, who was staring at them in the eyes.

"No," said he; "and we will either strangle or shoot them on the spot, as you prefer—say the word!"

"Oh! you would not wish our death," screamed out the unfortunate wretches, falling at my feet; "you will not order it; for we surrendered the moment we saw by your dress that you were the *Roman* who seeks the lion—you will never allow two defenceless men to be murdered."

"And pray, what may this be?" said Bou-aziz coldly, producing at the same time a long pistol he had just found in the branches of the lentisc.

"Oh! it is not mine," said one of the marauders; "I swear by the *Roman's* head, it is not mine."

"Nor mine," said the other, casting a reproachful glance, accompanied with the muttered epithets of dog and traitor, at his comrade in misfortune.

At the same moment, Bou-aziz produced a second pistol; then two cartridge-boxes; a bundle of false keys to open the shackles, which are attached to horses' legs; and, lastly, two daggers.

"And this,—and this,—and this?" exclaimed Bou-aziz, at every new discovery.

"Not ours, not ours!" answered the robbers each time, swearing now by the head of the *Roman*, now by that of the *Nazarene*.

"You are a brace of infamous liars, unworthy of the smallest compassion," said I, endeavouring to shake them off; "and you will follow me, that I may send you to-morrow to the camp at Guelma."

"We do not lie," they repeated, clinging to me; "these weapons are not ours; we have only borrowed them."

This excuse appeared to me so comical, that I could not help laughing; and these gentlemen took advantage

of this apparent relaxation of severity to become more pressing in their attempts to regain their liberty.

"You are wrong," said Bou-aziz; "these hyenas would have bitten you, had they met you alone."

"So you are not much acquainted with the 'men of night'? and you dare not go out without the light of the sun or the moon?" said one of the marauders, planting himself boldly before Bou-aziz.

"You were still sucking your mother's milk," answered he with contempt, "when I was leader of a fog;" and he added with importance, "I am the son of Ben-Rafah."

"Oh! pardon me," said the marauder humbly, "I had never seen you; but I knew you by reputation, and I acknowledge you are far superior to us; you are a man, and compared to you, we are but children. However, you may well believe that although we are very young, we look upon the Roman as the 'master of nights.' Wherever we meet him, we shall bow to him with the respect he deserves, and make way for him. He may kill us all, one after the other; not one of us will ever dare to touch a hair of his head."

I gave back their weapons to these men,—to the great regret of Bou-aziz, who wished particularly to keep them,—but on condition that I should hear no bad report about them during my stay in the country, and that they would warn their associates not to come in my way, under penalty of being shot without mercy.

"Thanks, master, thanks!" said they, as they went away; "he who seeks the lion is equal to the lion, and we are only jackals."

Ten minutes after, I could hear them still screaming out in the distance, *bahnadieba* (we are jackals).

In the meantime the lion had ceased roaring: I remarked to Bou-aziz how much annoyed I was at this silence.

"At this moment," he said, "the lion is preparing to attack the douar, where he means to take his supper; it is for that reason he is silent; but failing the lion's roars, we shall be guided by the noise of the dogs and the screams of the Arabs."

We continued our road discoursing of our last adven-

ture; and as I did not well comprehend of what use the tree could be to the marauders, Bou-aziz told me it was a trick they employed to approach the douars without being perceived, or to escape the observation of other marauders, when the latter happened to be in superior numbers. Hunters accustomed in France to make use of the *artificial bush*, or of the *moving hut* will perfectly understand the use of this stratagem, especially when employed at night.

"But how does the lion," said I to Bou-aziz, "allow these men to perambulate the country at the same time with himself?"

"Does the master," answered he, "ever injure his own servants?"

"The robbers then are the lion's servants?"

"When he meets them with their hands full, he takes from them the best they have got; and when they have not yet picked up any booty he obliges them to work for him."

"But how does the lion recognize those robbers, his servants?"

"By their dress: those who have no shirt on, he knows a whole league off. Those who have got a shirt, he knows half a league off. As to those who are more dressed than that, he knows them not to be his servants, and he devours them or kills them with fright."

So that (this opinion of Bou-aziz is for me a confirmed fact) the lion acts towards man quite in a different manner from that which he adopts with the beasts which he happens to kill for his daily food.

If he kills a man who has shot at him, he will not eat him. If he meets at night a man covered with one or several burnous, experience has taught him that he is not a robber, and he will devour him, or kill him by degrees with sheer terror, according to his caprice.

In the first case, after leaving him time just to say his prayer, he springs at his head, which he crushes at a single bite, instead of tearing open his throat as he does with all other animals. In the second case, he will sometimes bar the passage of the unfortunate man by stretching himself before him; sometimes he will walk by his side, showing him all his teeth. At another time he will,

perhaps, pretend to leave him in peace; then taking a long circuit he will go and wait for him as he passes by, and charge him with a fearful roar. Or again, he will crouch down flat on the ground like a cat, and bounding up at a couple of paces from the poor wretch, who of course thinks himself irretrievably lost, he will push at him with his shoulder and throw him over as if he were a bit of straw, or hit him in the face with his formidable tail, and keep turning round him.

It must be confessed that one might die under a less formidable trial; and that, with the pleasant prospect of being devoured afterwards, it is much preferable to be killed at once.

These manœuvres of the lion, which his victims of course never could report, have been related by Arabs who, having fled for safety to the tops of trees, had seen one of their companions, already too much appalled by fear to be able to imitate their example, dying with terror under their very eyes, without having it in their power to help him.

These various modes of attack, followed by a death rendered more terrible by all that precedes it, have, no doubt, given rise to the belief, true or false, of the fascination which the king of beasts is said to exercise over all those who do not belong to his species.

An anecdote, of a rather dramatic nature, which I have lately heard, will naturally find its place here.

“About thirty years ago, a young man, named Seghir, belonging to the tribe of the Amamera, established in the Aurès mountains, fell in love with a young girl who had been refused to him by the father on account of his poverty. The young people, however, were much attached to each other, and one fine evening the young girl ran away with her lover.

“The distance being considerable between the two douars, and the road extremely perilous, Seghir had armed himself from head to foot. Already the most dangerous parts of the road had been passed, and they were beginning to hear the dogs of the douar towards which they were rapidly advancing, when, all at once, a lion, who,

till that moment had lain concealed behind the bushes, rose and walked straight towards them.

"The young girl shrieked so fearfully that she was heard by the people in the tents, and several of the men immediately seized their arms and rushed out to the rescue. When they reached the spot to which they were directed by the screams of the young maiden, they saw the lion walking slowly a few paces in front of Seghir, with his eyes steadily fixed upon him, and leading him thus towards the forest.

"The young girl did all she could to prevent her lover following the lion, or to induce him to let go his hold of herself, but in vain: he kept dragging her on in spite of all her efforts, saying:

"Come, my beloved, come, our master will have it so, we must go!"

"But your weapons,' she cried, 'what are they good for, if not to save me?"

"Weapons!—I have none,' answered the fascinated wretch. 'Great lord, believe her not; she lies; I am perfectly unarmed, and will follow you wherever you will!"

"At this moment the Arabs, eight or ten in number, who had come to the rescue of the unfortunate couple, perceiving that the lion would very soon draw them into the forest, fired every one of them upon him; but on finding that he did not fall, they took to their heels. The lion sprang upon Seghir, and with one bound crushed him to the earth, smashing his head at a bite; after which he lay down by the side of the young girl, placing his huge paws upon her knees.

"The Arabs now finding that the lion did not condescend to pursue them, took courage and returned, and having reloaded their guns prepared again to fire; but being afraid of killing the girl, they told her to try and get a little away from the lion, which he allowed her to do, without however losing sight of her.

"The moment the guns of the Arabs were levelled at him, the lion sprang into the midst of them, seized one of them with his teeth and two others with his claws, dragging them thus together so as to make, as it were, one

bundle ; then placing under him that mass of palpitating flesh, he instantly smashed the three heads, as he had done that of Seghir. Those who had escaped ran off to the douar, and related what they had witnessed, but no one was bold enough to return for another attack. The lion then seized the woman and carried her off into the forest.

"Next day they came to carry away the bodies of the four men ; as to the young girl nothing was found but her hair, her feet, and her clothes."

Is it then really true that the lion has the power of fascinating the weak organization of certain men to the extent of obliging them to follow him ? All I can say is, that every Arab I have interrogated on the subject has answered me in the affirmative, and quoted a number of examples in support of his assertion.

As for myself, I can only say that whenever I have had the honour to find myself in the presence of this great monarch, I never felt the slightest inclination to follow his royal steps, though I can quite understand how his threatening aspect, his kingly majesty, and the piercing fixedness of his fiery look, should paralyze the heart and brain of those who meet him unexpectedly.

It was about one o'clock in the morning when we reached the right bank of the Oued-bou-sousa, which we crossed in the same manner as the first torrent. We were now coming nearer to the douars, and as we were marching in the direction of a fire which was burning brightly not very far from us, I despatched Bou-aziz to gather information.

"We have nothing left but to go to bed," said he, returning with several Arabs. "This douar, which offers hospitality, has been visited by the lion ; and as he has not roared ever since, it is quite impossible for us to know which way he has gone."

Being firmly resolved not to set my foot under a tent during the whole extent of this campaign, I only allowed my companions time to recruit themselves ; and at their return we went back to the forest to wait for daylight.

This time we again beheld passing before us animals of

all sorts, retiring at dawn to their respective dens, a sight always full of interest to a hunter, and which naturally recalled to my mind the beautiful trumpet song, for the stag, composed by my friend Léon Bertrand (*Les foulés*).

“L’aurore paraissait à peine,
Quand dans la brume, à l’horizon,
Je l’ai vu rentrant de la plaine,
Tout chargé de sa venaison.
Redressant sa large empaumure,
Il s’est arrêté par trois fois;
Puis il a longé la bordure,
Écoutant l’eau tomber sous bois.”

But alas! melancholy deception! it was in vain that I counted, one after the other, all those various animals; the king of the desert did not appear, and I had to return to Guelma at the expiration of my leave of absence.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LION KILLED.

THE next and following days, messages were again brought to me from the Arabs, more numerous and more pressing than ever, and after much importunity, they obtained for me another five days' leave, which was positively to be the last.

During the first days and the first nights, the lion seemed to have hid himself underground, and my strength and above all my hopes were almost at an end, when at last a shepherd came and told me that the oxen he was driving on the skirts of the wood had scented the lion, and had rushed towards the plain. It was about five o'clock in the evening when I received this happy news, and it required at least two hours to reach the spot mentioned. A neighbouring douar, however, sent

us horses, with men to bring them back, and by sunset we dismounted on a sort of platform which commanded the lion's resort.

I then dismissed the horses and the Arabs, keeping only near me Bou-aziz, a spahi, who was a native of that country, called Bou-oumbask, and a dog who had the glorious name of *Lion*.

During this two hours' run across the plain, I had carried my gun in a sling, and when I proceeded to load it, I found to my great dismay that the left-side hammer was lost; I had but one barrel left. This discovery was of course extremely annoying to me; but it was my very last day's leave, and there was no help for it.

Having loaded with a single bullet, and with the most particular care, the right barrel of my gun, I waited patiently for the lion's awaking. Daylight was already fading away, the forest was assuming its more sombre hues, and nothing except the absence of wild boars rooting up the ground in the glades betokened the presence of him of whom I was in search. I knew we had no moonlight to expect when the sun was fairly gone, and every minute was bringing the darkness of that night which was to be the last of my leave.

I cannot express the anxiety, vexation, and grief I experienced at seeing my precious time run out so rapidly. I counted and recounted the days and nights which had elapsed since my departure from camp, and ever reverted to the desperate conclusion, that I must positively return next morning, and this without any hope of being allowed to leave again.

Bou-aziz at last pointed out to me the first stars beginning to shine forth in the sky, and said:

"The lion must have quitted his 'repair' and left the forest on the plain side; we should wait in vain here all night."

And with this he proceeded to place his gun upon his shoulder, pressing me to return to the douar with him.

I could not, however, persuade myself to abandon my post as long as there remained the faintest ray of hope.

"Go on," I said to my companions, "I will follow you."

They had scarcely gone ten paces, when a most formidable roar resounded in the ravine at our very feet. This roar filled my heart with so much joy, that forgetting the unfortunate state of my gun, and without caring whether I was followed or not, I dashed through the wood in search of the lion.

When I ceased to hear him, I stopped to listen. Bou-aziz and Bou-oumbask were upon my heels, pale as ghosts, not daring to speak, but gesticulating at a great rate, to make me comprehend that I was sacrificing my life. A few minutes after the lion roared again, at about a hundred paces from us; and at the very first growl I dashed forward, rushing through the wood with the impetuosity of a wild animal.

When the lion ceased to roar, I halted again in a small glade, where my two companions joined me. My dog, who until then had kept behind me, without seeming to comprehend, began to snuff the wind; then he entered the wood cautiously, with his hair bristling and his tail low:—a minute after he came galloping back much frightened, and crouched down between my legs.

Soon after this I heard loud and heavy steps on the leaves which covered the ground, and the rustling of a huge body through the trees bordering the glade. It was the lion himself leaving his lair, and ascending towards us, without suspecting our presence. Bou-aziz and the spahi were already shouldering their guns.

I then pointed out to them with my foot a lentisc some paces behind me, telling them not to stir from that spot until the end of the drama, a command which they did not fail to obey. Indeed, I must give these worthy fellows much credit for persisting in staying by me, notwithstanding their extreme terror; for, judge it as you please, I, for my part, think it no mean courage, when you have your doubts about the success of an adventure, to accept the passive part of spectator, and to remain unmoved on the scene of action.

The lion was still ascending; I could now measure the

distance which separated me from him, and could distinguish the regular, rumbling sound of his heavy breathing. I then advanced a few paces nearer to the edge of the glade where I expected him to appear, in order to have a chance of shooting him closer. I could already hear him advancing at thirty paces, then at twenty, then at fifteen: still I felt no fear. All I thought was, suppose he were to turn back! Suppose he does not come out into the glade! And at each sound which showed him nearer to me, my heart beat louder, in a complete rapture of joy and hope. One anxious thought only crossed my mind. "What if my gun were to miss fire?" said I, glancing down upon it. But confidence again prevailed, and my only anxiety was for the long-wished-for appearance of my foe.

The lion, after a short pause, which seemed to me an age, began to come forward again; and presently I could see before me, by the starlight, at but a few paces off, the top of a small tree, which I could almost touch, actually shaken by the contact of the lion. This was his last pause. There was now between us two but the thickness of that single tree, covered with branches from the foot upwards.

I was standing with my face to the wood, and with my gun pointed, so as to be ready to fire the moment the animal should enter the glade; and having still an interval of about a second, I took advantage of it to make sure that I could regulate properly the aim of my barrel. Thanks to a glimmer of light which came from the west, to the clearness of the sky filled with shining stars, and to the whiteness of the glade, which was conspicuous against the dark green of the forest, I could just see the end of my barrels; that was all, but it sufficed for so close an aim. It is scarcely necessary to say that I did not waste much time in this investigation.

I was beginning to find that the animal was rather slow in his motions, and to fear that, instead of advancing unsuspectingly, he had become aware of my presence and was about to spring over the lentisc which separated us. As if to justify this fear, the lion gave two or three deep growls, and then began to roar furiously.

Oh! my fellow-disciples of Saint Hubert; you, who can feel and understand, fancy yourselves at night in the open forest, leaning against a small tree, out of which rises a volley of roars enough to drown the noise of thunder itself. Imagine yourselves with only one single shot to fire on this formidable animal, who only falls by the merest chance under a single ball, and who kills his opponent without mercy, if he is not killed himself.

You can doubtless understand that, had I trusted to my strength alone, my heart would have failed me; in spite of my efforts, my sight would have become dim, and my hand unsteady. Yes; I will confess frankly and without shame, that terrible roar made me *feel* that man was small indeed in presence of the lion; and without a firm will and that absolute confidence which I derived from the inexhaustible Source of all power, I believe I should have failed in that awful moment. But this strength enabled me to listen to the tremendous voice of my enemy without trembling, or even emotion; and to the end I retained a perfect mastery over the pulsations of my heart and a full control over my nerves.

When I heard the lion make a last step, I moved a little aside; and no sooner did his enormous head rise out of the wood, at two or three yards' distance from me, and he stopped to stare at me with a look of wonder, than I aimed between the eye and ear, and slowly pressed the trigger. From the instant I touched this, until I heard the report of the gun, my heart ceased to beat.

After the shot I could see nothing; but through the smoke which enveloped the lion I heard the most tremendous, agonizing, and fearfully-protracted roar. My two men meantime had jumped up, but without making a step forward, and unable to see any thing, stood with their guns shouldered, ready to fire. For myself, I waited dagger in hand, and one knee on the ground, until the smoke should disperse, and I could see how matters stood. As soon as all was clear I beheld,—first one paw,—and, heavens, what a paw!—then one leg, then a shoulder, then the head—and at last the whole body of my enemy. He lay on his side and gave not the smallest sign of life!

"Take care! do not approach him yet," cried Bouaziz, throwing a large stone, which bounded from *the lion's corpse*.

HE WAS DEAD!

That day was the eighth of July, one thousand eight hundred and forty-four.

Without allowing me time to approach my victim, to contemplate and to touch him, my companions sprang towards me like two madmen, and I had all the trouble in the world to save myself from being knocked down and smothered by their wild demonstrations of enthusiasm, gratitude, and joy.

After me it became the lion's turn, upon whose dead carcass they showered insults, epithets, and blows, firing at the same time shot after shot to announce the news to the neighbouring douars.

After jumping, dancing, gambolling, and howling to their heart's content around the animal; after measuring his length, the breadth of his head and of his paws, the size of his teeth and claws, I was at last allowed to see and touch him in peace and at my leisure. I had no difficulty in ascertaining that he was indeed the ancient monarch of the forest.

To give an idea of what this lion was, it will suffice to say, that with the strength of our six arms we were unable to turn him round; and that his head alone was so massive and heavy that I could scarcely raise it from the ground.

A few distant reports had at first answered the shots of my companions, but at length it became a complete rattle of musketry; and in less than an hour after, the forest was filled with men on horseback, carrying others behind them, and who were all anxious to see and touch the slain enemy.

By the united efforts of the numerous troops now collected on the spot, we succeeded in placing the lion on the back of two mules placed side by side, and in this manner marched along until we arrived at the neighbouring douar.

In spite of the late hour (it was near midnight) every one was on foot. Large fires, illuminating the

whole country round, were being kindled, in order that every one might enjoy the sight of the lion ; and whilst the men were thus employed, the women sang the war-song, beating an accompaniment with their hands.

The lion having been stretched upon a mat, each came in their turn to apostrophize and admire him, and it was with difficulty that the ladies refrained from tearing out the claws and mane of the animal, with which to make ornaments and amulets. The remainder of the night was given up to rejoicing, and at the dawn of day I started for Guelma, accompanied by a thousand heartfelt blessings on the part of the inhabitants. The hatred of the women had vanished with the lion's life, and they now showed themselves the most grateful and enthusiastic of all. As for the men, they were resolved to make my fortune, and for this purpose they wished me, before returning to Guelma, to call at all the donars which had been visited by the lion, and to receive one ox per tent, by way of reward. The offer was made quite seriously ; for they proposed to begin with themselves, and to furnish me with horsemen to drive the cattle behind the lion ; so that by accepting this offer I might have made my appearance in camp, in the evening, at the head of a thousand oxen bellowing "Victory."

I determined, however, to return with my lion alone.

You must have been very rich then,—the reader will perhaps say,—to give up this voluntary tribute which would have brought you in upwards of 100,000 francs ? Not in the least, I was poor as Job ; but, in your eyes, as in mine, does not the payment of a benefit conferred destroy the whole zest of it ? Whether right or wrong, I have since more than twenty times over refused a similar offer¹.

In the meantime, we were proceeding towards Guelma as speedily as the weight of the beast, the necessary

¹ The proposal which was made to me on this occasion by the Arabs, reminds me of a custom still existing in some of the departments in France. In certain country places, the man who has killed a wolf is authorized to carry him from village to village, and the farmers and peasants contribute together to pay a sort of tribute to the fortunate hunter.

relays, the resistance of the mules who were to carry the lion, and the crowds of people gathering on the road to see us pass, would permit us to go.

I was already within sight of the walls of our camp, when a horseman—having another man behind him, came up at a gallop, and placed himself across the road. The man who sat behind dropped to the ground, and I immediately recognized the old man to whom I had adjudged *the lion's beard*. The execution was therefore performed forthwith, and I can truly say that this good man was as happy in possessing the lion's beard, as I was myself in having been able to keep my word.

On arriving at Guelma, the lion was exhibited for the curiosity of the inhabitants, then skinned, cut up, distributed, and lastly eaten by our comrades. His size was unusually great, and my friend Valle, an officer of the regiment, one of the spectators present at his arrival at Guelma, reminds me, at the moment I am writing these lines, of a fact which is not without significance. It was this: "All those who came to look at him in the place where he had been deposited, had scarcely gone out, when they returned again; and all declared that they found him larger, more magnificent, more tremendous than the first time."

There is another remarkable fact respecting this lion, which belonged to the yellow species, that may be worth relating.

The barrack where the spahis lodged, in which he had been skinned and cut up, was situated in the road by which the troop-horses were led to the watering-pond. Although the animal's blood had been most carefully washed off, and the barrack door was kept carefully shut, for several days the horses and mules obstinately refused to pass before that door. Indeed, their terror was such, that not one man could induce his horse to go along this path, nor could even strange horses be prevailed upon to pass.

A few days after this first victory I was called to Bone by General Randon, who presented me, in the name of the Duke d'Aumale, with a gun of honour. My captain also, to whom the skin of this lion had been

promised, whilst still alive, presented me with a double-barrelled gun to serve me in case of future need.

At my return to Guelma, I soon found myself an object of immense curiosity for the Arabs, who flocked from their mountains on purpose to see me, and now instead of using my own name, they called me *Bou-sioud*, or *Katel-sioud*, "the master of lions," or "the lion-killer."

And yet, I had made but a first essay, and I was particularly anxious to deserve the double title thus conferred upon me.

The opportunity soon presented itself.

CHAPTER V.

AN EXCURSION IN THE MAHOUNA.—MY SECOND LION.

ON the 4th of August, 1844, I received a deputation from the inhabitants of the Mahouna, *the paradise of lions*, and by sunset I had reached the douar from which I had been sent for.

Having found there enormous fires,—regular pyres,—ready prepared all round the enclosure, I forbade them to be lighted, and forthwith looked out for the post I designed to occupy during the night.

The douar was situated on a platform commanding a steep declivity, and surrounded by a hedge two yards and a half high. As the lion was accustomed to clear this hedge, sometimes at one point, sometimes on another, and the circumference of the enclosure was very extensive, it was rather hard to guess on which side he might make his entry that night. After some search, however, I found the road he more usually followed, and there I placed myself in the very path of the enemy, a hundred yards outside the douar, to the great astonishment of the Arabs, who kept repeating to me, "Stay not there, he will knock you over."

Perceiving that I did not attend to their observations,

and that this post suited me, they hastened to bring me mats and cushions, and arranged for me by starlight a pretty comfortable camp bed. After this came a copious supper, to which I did but little honour; and as the "ogre" (or *ghoul* in Arabic) was only to come late in the night, these gentlemen condescended to spend part of the evening with me. A general conversation then took place, in which every one vied with his neighbour, in relating all sorts of adventures, more or less tragical, about the lions.

Whilst we are waiting until our lion thinks proper to make his appearance, I may as well tell you one of their stories which I happen to have remembered.

Among the Arabs, when a *high-tent* man marries, he invites a number of people, who go and fetch the bride at her parent's house to bring her to her new dwelling, a ceremony which is performed in a palanquin, numberless shots being at the same time fired on the road.

Every marriage, however, is not alike. If some are accompanied by a numerous retinue,—if sometimes the happy couple number amongst their guests many a rich and handsome horseman; at other times, as with us, more than one bridegroom has not even enough to pay the fiddlers who escort him. Such being the case with Smaïl, who had paid down the day before his very last shilling for his bride's marriage portion, he assembled only his nearest relatives, and proceeded with them on foot to the abode of his future father-in-law.

Having regaled themselves plentifully with mutton and couscoussou, and the marriage being concluded, they fired off a few cartridges by way of salute, taking care to keep a few for the journey back. There was no signing of the marriage-contract, for the very simple reason, that none of the assistants knew how to write; and in the evening they all parted, wishing each other good fortune and happiness.

The bridegroom's douar was but a league distant; the moon shone beautifully bright; the bride's escort numbered nine guns; what was to be feared on the way? But it is not unfrequently at the very moment one

expects him the least, that an intruder will present himself.

Smail was walking in front, beside his bride, to whom he was speaking, in a soft low voice, about the happiness which awaited them under his tent. The friends of the husband were following discreetly some paces behind, firing at times a shot in the air; and the young wife seemed quite gratified with this little offering of powder burnt in her honour. Every thing in short went on in the most satisfactory manner.

But, alas! all of a sudden, a certain jealous individual—the devil—who had not been invited, and who delights in mischief, presents himself under the shape of an enormous lion, stretched across the very path these happy young folks were pursuing!

They were about halfway between the two douars, and it was fully as dangerous to go forward as to draw back. What was to be done?

The opportunity presented to the bridegroom of winning for ever his wife's affections by a noble act of devotedness was too good to be lost. Balls were accordingly rammed down the barrel of every gun, the bride was placed in the centre of a sort of square formed by the assistants, and the escort marched bravely forward, headed by Smail. Already they had advanced to within thirty yards from the lion, who never moved.

Smail now ordered his friends to stop, and saying to his young wife, "See now if you have married a man;" he walked straight up to the lion, and commanded him to clear the way.

At twenty paces, the lion, until then crouching and motionless, raised his monstrous head, and was evidently preparing for a spring. Smail, regardless of his wife's screams, and the entreaties of his relatives, who called to him to retreat, put one knee to the ground, levelled the barrel of his gun towards the animal, took a steady aim, and fired. In an instant the wounded and furious animal bounded forward on the unfortunate Smail, knocked him to the ground, and tore him to shreds in the twinkling of an eye, then rushed madly towards the square, in the centre of which stood the wretched bride.

“Let no one fire,” cried Smail’s father, “until he touches the barrels of our guns.”

But, added the narrator of this episode, where is the man sufficiently self-possessed to await without flinching that hurricane called a lion, as he rushes on towards his prey with immense bounds, with mane floating in the wind, expanded jaws, and eyes inflamed with fury?

The whole party now fired at once, without heeding in what direction their balls went, and the lion dashed on the square, which he quickly overthrew, smashing the bones and tearing the flesh of all whom he found before him. Some of the men had managed to escape, dragging after them with much difficulty the poor bride, almost dead by this time with fright, but they were quickly followed by their insatiable enemy, and torn to pieces; one only, more fortunate than the rest, having contrived to reach the foot of a steep rock, upon which, thanks to his efforts, the woman also found a refuge.

He had already climbed the rock some little way, when the lion again advanced, if possible still more furious, and at one spring, caught the right leg of the man, and dragged him down with him to the ground; while the unhappy bride, crawling with hands and feet to the summit of the rock, was doomed to witness from her inaccessible retreat the woful and hideous spectacle of the death-agony of the last of her defenders.

After two or three useless attempts, the lion, finding he could not get at the woman, returned to the body of his last victim, and began tearing it in bits, as if to revenge himself for the loss of the last living prey which was thus eluding his grasp.

The remainder of the night passed away without any new incident. As soon as day began to dawn, the lion left the foot of the rock, and retired towards the mountains; but he went off very slowly, and did not finally abandon his post without stopping more than once on his road, and throwing back a wistful glance on the prey he was leaving behind.

A short time after the animal’s departure, a troop of horsemen came across the plain, and on Smail’s widow making signals of distress with her veil, for she was now

without strength or voice, they galloped towards her, and took her back to her father. The poor thing expired, however, on the following day.

I will spare the reader all the exclamations, the bad names, and the insults, which were showered on the devoted head of the lion at the close of this story, the recital of which lasted pretty far into the night.

The Arabs now left me, expressing every good wish, and praying that God might be with me, and I remained in company with a native corporal of spahis, whose brother was the cheik of that district. His only weapon was his regimental gun. I carried the double-barrelled gun presented to me by Captain Durand.

The path upon which we were posted, ascended by a very steep declivity from a wooded ravine, in which the lion lay all day, up to the platform upon which the douar was situated. Supposing him to come as he had previously done, direct from the bottom of the ravine, I should have had to shoot him, firing downwards; whilst, on the contrary, if he went to the douar by another path, and returned this way, the chances were that I should be below him. In this uncertainty, I took up my position, so that my view should not be intercepted by the cork trees, which bordered the path above and below me, and so as to keep open on each side a space of some thirty to forty yards. In order, too, that I might be able to hear the smallest noise, and to perceive distinctly every thing that moved around me, I had ordered every dog to be carefully secured under the tents of the douar.

Towards one o'clock in the morning Saadi-bou-nar, who was little accustomed to night watches of this duration, expressed a desire to lie down behind me, to which I agreed; and I must do him the justice to say that it was not long before he was sound asleep. I know a good many *bravos*, who, in spite of their grand airs, would scarcely have done the same, at such an hour and in such a place.

Up to this moment the sky had been bright and calm, with a clear and beautiful moon; but gradually some clouds began to appear to the westward, and to pass over my head,

impelled by a heavy sultry wind, which had now sprung up. The weather soon became overcast; the moon was entirely obscured, and thunder began to rumble in the distance, while big drops were already falling, and seemed to foretel a heavy storm of rain.

My companion, wakened by the noise of the thunder, and by the rain which had already begun to wet him through, as well as myself, called out to me, and advised me to retire into the douar. But he had no sooner spoken, than the Arabs were heard screaming aloud: "Take care of yourselves; the lion is sure to come in the very thickest of the storm!" I need not say that this announcement only made me more than ever resolved to remain at my post. I therefore covered over the locks of my gun with my burnous, whilst Saadi-bou-nar proceeded to fold himself up in his own with heroic resignation.

In the meantime the rain,—of short duration, like all storm-showers,—was abating by degrees: only a few fitful gleams of lightning continued to flash through the clouds in the horizon, and the rays of the moon, pure and bright, again began to appear at short intervals over our heads.

I made the best use of these moments, which were only but too short, in order to survey attentively every object within view; and, during one of these transitory gleams of light, I thought all of a sudden that I beheld the lion. Yes; it was indeed he;—standing motionless at only a few paces from the douar.

Accustomed to find fires lighted up at his approach, to hear a multitude of anxious dogs howling with terror, and to see all the strong men throwing flaming brands at his head, he, no doubt, found it difficult to account for the extraordinary silence which at this moment reigned throughout the douar.

While I was cautiously turning myself, so as to aim at my ease without being perceived by the animal, a last cloud passed over the moon. I was seated with my left elbow resting on my knee, my gun at my shoulder, looking now at the lion, which I could only distinguish as a large confused mass, now at the cloud, of which I anxiously measured the length and probable duration. I had not

waited long before a ray of light,—more beautiful a hundred times in my eyes than the most brilliant sunshine,—shot from the sky, revealing to me the lion still motionless in the same place, and all the more visible from his standing in an elevated spot.

It was a fine black-maned lion of the largest size, and truly magnificent he looked, with his majestic air, his head erect, and his superb mane floating in the wind and falling below his knees.

He stood broadside towards me. I took aim behind the shoulder, and fired.

Whilst the report was repeated by a hundred echoes, I heard a fearful roar of agony and rage, and at the same instant saw the lion bounding upon me through the smoke. Saadi-bou-nar, thus abruptly roused for the second time, quickly seized his gun, and was about to fire over my shoulder. Turning aside the barrel, however, with a push of my elbow, just as the lion with a fearful roar had advanced to within three paces from me, I discharged my second ball full in his breast.

Before I could catch up my companion's gun, the lion had rolled over, expiring at my very feet, which were actually covered with torrents of his blood. He had died so close to me, that I could readily touch him, without having to move an inch from my place.

At first, I thought it must be a dream. Was it possible that the terrible animal I had seen but a minute before, first proudly erect, then bounding furiously, and rending the air with his formidable roars, could be that monstrous body now stretched inert and motionless at my feet? The screams of Saadi-bou-nar, calling the Arabs of the douar to come near, soon convinced me that I was not deceived.

I must confess, however, after having analyzed all my feelings, that I did not at first experience any thing like the joy I had felt at the death of my first lion: very far from it. Such was the fact, and perhaps it could scarcely be otherwise.

On searching for my balls, I found the first one,—that which had not proved effectual,—right behind the shoulder, exactly where I had intended it should penetrate; while

the second, fired hastily and almost at random, had caused death. I now saw clearly that a correct aim was not sufficient to kill the lion, and the question was a much more serious one than I had at first imagined. Fortunately, these difficulties which puzzled me for the present, vanished at a future period.

As I stood looking at my noble victim, and listened to the reports of the guns carrying from douar to douar the news of my victory, I began to dismiss my anxiety, and to enjoy more fully the satisfaction of this new triumph. The Arabs, however, had not yet made their appearance, and I was beginning to wonder at their apparent indifference, when Saadi-bou-nar explained it to me by saying that no doubt they were afraid to come too quickly, lest the lion should not be yet dead. More than half an hour, in fact, elapsed before they dared to leave their camp; and when the three boldest among them ventured at last out of the enclosure to bring me a jug of water which I had asked for, this prudent triumvirate made their appearance in the following order.

The first Arab proceeded stealthily, stopping every minute to look right and left, with his gun shouldered, ready to fire; the second, bearing the vessel of water came next, holding the foremost by the skirts of his burnous, stopping as he stopped, and advancing as he advanced; and last of all, by way of rear-guard, came the third, holding the burnous of the second with one hand, and brandishing an enormous yatagan with the other; and even when they had come within view of the lion, Saadi-bou-nar was obliged to strike the dead body with his hand in order to convince them that they were safe in advancing.

"The first step is the hardest to take," says the proverb, and so it proved here. Five minutes afterwards, the whole douar flocked together; and men, women, and children came up pell-mell, pushing each about and vying with each other in kissing the fortunate hand of the victor, and at the same time insulting him who but a few minutes before had made them all shudder with affright.

By dawn of day the Arabs were pouring in by hundreds from all sides, bringing their families along with

them; and during these visits, which lasted for some hours, I employed myself in noting for my own information the speeches and acts of the visitors.

First of all the inhabitants of a whole douar came up by the path facing the ravine; of whom one man only,—the leader,—was mounted, the others walking alongside of the mules which carried the women and children. Among them I remarked an unfortunate beast, upon whose back no less than five persons were packed one behind the other.

The horseman who led the van advanced boldly for a time, but no sooner had the horse arrived within thirty paces from the lion than he became frightened, and plunged so violently as almost to overturn the whole file. Upon this the rider dismounted, and each man stepped forward, still standing however at about ten paces from the lion. As for the women, they stayed behind, not being yet able to get rid of a certain impression of dread.

It certainly was a spectacle as curious as it was instructive, to behold these warlike men standing at a respectful distance before this animal, so recently their living scourge, and now an inanimate corpse.

One by one they squatted in silence around their dead enemy, then beckoned to the women, who came forward and sat down timidly behind them, each family forming a group around its chief. For several minutes their looks alone spoke; their eyes moving from the lion to the man, and again from the man to the lion. Throughout those groups of spectators, of different ages and sexes, there was upon every countenance, more or less marked, such a mixture of astonishment and of fear, of admiration and of respect, that my feelings were more excited by this circumstance than they had been at the enthusiastic and tumultuous ovation I had received from the inhabitants of El-archioua.

I had not yet moved from my night's post, and it was there that each family in their turn presented to me their thanks and their congratulations. The men kissed the skirts of my burnous, or the gun placed beside me, saying, "May God ever protect your arm, and fill you with

all his blessings!" while the women kissed my hand, and said, "God bless your mother!" or, "God grant fruitfulness to your wife!" At the same time making a hundred inquiries about my mother, my country, and my family.

More than fifty of these women, who a month before would have run away from me, as one would run from some unclean animal, the very sight of which inspired repulsion and disgust, were now clustered around me, and pressing upon me on all sides; chattering away with a respectful familiarity, which they would not have shown to a man of their own country and religion.

The mothers would make their children, who took me for an ogre, touch and kiss me, saying, "This one does not eat little children; he only hurts lions, and he is our friend, our brother." The young girls, more reserved, whispered among themselves, while the grandmothers were never wearied of talking to me and interrogating me, principally about my mother. They knew not, poor women! that of all these questions only one went to my heart and filled it with the sweetest emotions. And yet there was no lack here of very pretty faces, such in fact as seldom showed themselves without veils, especially to my countrymen.

There was, moreover, an immense crowd of men who had hastened to the spot to compliment me, one after the other; an unanimous and most flattering concert, enough to raise the vanity of many a one more modest than myself.

Well! above all this put together, I say it in all the sincerity of my heart, I much preferred the good old women, who talked to me about my mother; asking me her name, her age, in what country I had left her, whether I did not long to see her again, if I often heard from her, and, lastly, if ever there was a chance of her coming to this country; and who never ended their string of questions without calling down upon her every species of blessing.

I felt highly pleased at having been so successful in this second enterprise, for the victory, it will be seen, procured me many a sweet satisfaction. Indeed it would have

been difficult to obtain a more complete and signal success in the midst of a hostile population.

Unable to refuse any thing to the entreaties of these good women, I gave them a few locks of the lion's mane, and I even promised them to keep for them his heart, which they wished to divide among themselves and to give their male children to eat, with the idea of making them one day strong and courageous men.

At twelve o'clock, the lion was making his triumphant entry into the camp of Guelma, and on the evening of the same day he was suffering the "*lex talionis*;" which means, that after devouring so many victims, he was, in his turn, roasted and served up in many a canteen, where officers and soldiers feasted on his flesh.

From that day, whenever a lion made his appearance in a tribe, the Arabs sent off to fetch me, as if I had been the chief judge and executioner of the leonine race. My officers, on their part, had in consequence of my success become much more indulgent in granting me leave of absence, and, in fact, gave me every facility for answering these calls upon my aid.

CHAPTER VI.

A CAMPAIGN IN THE CIRCLE OF BONE.

THE month of September, 1844, was entirely employed by me in the pursuit of a lion in the Mahouna; but I unfortunately had not the good luck to meet with him. Soon afterwards, I was sent for by the Ouled-bou-aziz of the circle of Bone, whose douars are planted to the south of the lake Fedzara.

The lion who frequented those lands, I was told, only attacked horses, mules and oxen; and every evening was said to roam over an extent of twelve or fifteen leagues. From what I heard of some men who had seen him, I

judged him to be a male, full grown, and of the black-maned species.

I employed a whole day in taking a careful survey of the country, and of the paths and fords frequented by the animal, and the following day at sunset, I posted myself in an open spot where several roads met, and where I knew he was accustomed to pass. It was the first time I found myself absolutely alone, at night, awaiting a lion, and I must confess that, when he began to roar, I coveted the presence of Bou-aziz, or some other companion, even if it had been only a dog.

But this feeling was of short duration. Very soon I began even to exult in my loneliness, amidst this profound solitude, and I felt myself immeasurably increased in stature, when, single-handed, and through one of the darkest nights, I marched forth to meet the lion, with a firm heart and a steady hand.

It was about eleven o'clock at night. The lion came down from the mountain, roaring with all the power of his lungs, and I proceeded to meet him, following the very same path he was treading himself.

All at once he ceased to roar, after which I thought I heard cries of distress a short distance in front of me. Hastening forward, I found myself at the turn of a wooded pass, face to face with three marauders, mounted on beasts of burden which they had just stolen, and marching, owing to the narrowness of the path, in single file. The foremost having stopped on perceiving me, the two others of course did the same. Taking a steady aim at the leader, I cried out in a cool, commanding tone, "Dismount, rascal, or I fire!"

I had scarcely uttered this new *qui-vive* when the coward disappeared under the belly of his beast; and, on challenging the second, he made his exit in a similar manner; the third, however, who seemed to be bolder than his two comrades, showed no inclination to move, and even whispered to them a sharp reproach for allowing themselves to be thus stopped by a single man, after facing the fury of the lion they had just encountered in the mountain.

I instantly stepped up to this boaster, and seizing him

by one foot, without any more ado, tossed him head foremost on the ground.

"Let not one of you presume to defend himself or to fly," I cried to the marauders, as I jumped on a small hillock which commanded the path, "or I will blow out the brains of every one of you;—sons of dogs that you are!"

"By Allah! can it be *he*?" said a voice. "To be sure it is," said another; "it can be no other." "Let us try and get out of this scrape as well as we can," prudently added the third. And with this they advanced together to parley with me.

"Not one step more, or I fire!" said I to the frightened trio, showing them the end of my barrels; "stand still, or rather sit down where you are; and especially keep your hands quiet, if you do not wish my balls to make acquaintance with your ribs."

As soon as they had seated themselves at a respectful distance, I said to them, "Let him speak who just now thought it so shameful for three men to be arrested by a single adversary."

"God forbid, my lord," answered the fellow, "that I should have ever harboured the foolish thought of resisting you; only I saw that you were mistaking us for robbers, whilst we are in reality honest people, driving home the property we had lost. We have just given up to the lion a colt, two years old, which he desired to have, and we are ready, in hopes of remaining on good terms with you, to let you have one of these three beasts; after which you will perhaps allow us to return in peace to our respective tents."

"Believe not for an instant," said I to the speaker, "that you can impose upon me by your fine words. The lion has taken from you what he pleased; well, I shall do the same; and, since he has taken a colt, I shall take you as a hostage, until I have made sure that your brethren have restored to the neighbouring douar those beasts, of which to a certainty you have robbed them. In the meantime, take me directly to the spot where the lion carried off your colt."

The robbers remonstrated vehemently on the dangers

of this countermarch; but at last they listened to reason, and, as in order to make the required restitution it was necessary that they should retrace their steps, they consented to accompany me, and we proceeded together towards the mountain. To prevent, however, any attempt at escape, I mounted the mare whose colt had become the prey of the lion, and marched on in front, my three men driving the mules before them.

In this order we reached the place where the lion had strangled the colt, but to my great regret we found the spot empty and deserted. Thinking that, according to his habit, he might perhaps have carried the prey to some rivulet or fountain, I inquired of the marauders if there was any water in the neighbourhood, on which they directed me to a fountain situated in a ravine below the path. This pass, however, appeared to me rather too thickly wooded to venture into it with my prisoners, whom I looked upon with considerable suspicion, and I therefore resolved to make straight for the mountain; my object being to ascertain in what douar the robbery had been committed, and there to await the lion on his return.

On reaching the skirts of the forest, I perceived some fires, which the robbers confessed were those of the tents where they had committed the robbery. I here dismounted, and dismissed two of the marauders, commanded them not to return until the mules and the mare should be restored to the park, which the latter was already saluting with her maternal neighs. The third marauder I kept with me as a hostage.

At dawn of day the two companions returned, swearing to me that they had punctually followed my orders, on which I permitted them to retire, but not without assuring them that in case I discovered any deceit on their part, they might make sure of my finding them out again.

Shortly after the departure of the three men, I saw some horsemen, followed by dogs, on the side of the mountain, which they seemed to be searching with great care, and observing that they had dismounted, and gathered in a cluster, I advanced towards them, and found

them beside the remains of the poor colt which had been devoured three hours before by the lion.

I accepted the hospitality which they offered me, and on reaching their tents found that my robbers, with the help of last night's lesson, had still some conscience left.

I then sent for my horse, which I had left at some distance, in a douar of the plain, and spent the whole day under the tent of my new hosts.

At night we heard the roar of the lion again in the mountain, and in about an hour afterwards he descended, coming closer to the douar, and roaring at equal intervals of about a quarter of an hour each. Recommending my horse to the good offices of my hosts, and directing them to give him next day to the messenger I should send for him, I proceeded across the fields towards the path taken by the lion.

By the time I reached the path he had got a good way ahead of me, following a wooded slope where I could not see him, and keeping always about five hundred paces in advance. Notwithstanding my utmost efforts, I found it impossible to come up with him; and as I marched on, the roaring seemed to me to become more and more distant. In this way I arrived at the banks of the Qued-el-ghout, which I crossed by a ford so deep, that the water reached above my waist.

Towards two o'clock in the morning I found myself in sight of the lake Fedzara, the lion meantime roaring to the westward, nearly three miles off. I had walked then full six hours (having left the douar at ten o'clock), under a pelting rain, which, as it fell down steadily, threatened to last on until daylight. My two burnous were wet through; and as I feared that my gun, getting wet also, might fail me in the moment of need, I sought shelter under a rocky bank which commanded the road.

There I lighted, not without considerable difficulty, a sort of bivouac-fire, and waited patiently for dawn, without losing one of the distant roars of the lion, who, however, never returned.

I will spare the reader a more lengthened despatch on the details of this hard campaign, which lasted no less than forty consecutive nights, without rest or cessation,

whatever might be the state of the weather. Suffice it to say that, having started from the mountains near the camp of *Nech-Meïa*, in the north, this lion made me follow him to the environs of *Philippeville*, through the valley of *Jemmapes*, and across the *Oued-kebir* and the *Salsaf*, with my gun and ammunition wrapped up in my burnous and tied over my head; that we returned together, one following the other, over the very same path; and that it was only on the morning of the forty-first day that I returned to Guelma, oppressed by a fever, against which I had been vainly struggling for more than a week.

This is indeed, dear brethren in Saint Hubert, what may be called playing an innings without a score.

I left my lion in the very same chain of mountains where I had heard him roar for the first time, and that, without having for one instant lost his spoor.

I may add that during this long excursion, I had every reason to congratulate myself on the firm but humane conduct which I had adopted towards the nocturnal marauders; for I had several similar encounters afterwards in the open forest, and I am obliged, in truth, to declare that I never observed in them again any malevolent or hostile intention.

CHAPTER VII.

MY THIRD LION.

ON my return to Guelma, my first care was to get cured of the fever which had obliged me to give up my search after the lion. But do what I would, I could not get rid of it; and, at last, it became so serious, that early in the year 1845, I determined to go to Bone for change of air.

The first information I received on setting foot in that town, was that my lion had just made a hecatomb of horses and mules, in a farm situated in the midst of the

plain, near the mosque of Sidi-déndén. Although still on the sick-list, I immediately sent to Guelma for my arms, and set out, armed with two guns, that which had been presented to me by the Duke d'Aumale, and that with which I had killed my second lion.

I spent my first night in the farm; and on the next, at sunset, I dismounted among the Ouled-bou-aziz, in sight of the mountain of Krou-néga.

The lion, after performing the long round already mentioned, had returned to his usual abode; and the Arabs having assured me that every evening their douars were attacked by him, I forthwith loaded my guns. The very moment I was fixing on the last cap, the lion set up his first roar.

As it was my first visit to this part of the country, I inquired for a guide, who could show me the usual path of the animal; and my host, Ahmed-ben-ali, having offered himself, I took my departure with him.

The night very soon became so intensely dark, that I could not even see my companion who was walking scarcely two paces in front of me. Having reached a rivulet, the sides of which were covered and embanked, my guide said to me, "This is the ford the lion is in the habit of crossing every night, and he will certainly be here before another hour has elapsed; but if you agree with me, we will return to the douar until the moon rises, and wait for him as he returns; or, otherwise, we can put off our search till to-morrow, when the sun will throw his welcome light upon our researches."

I was too much annoyed at the remembrance of the forty nights' watch so recently passed, to allow this good opportunity for meeting the enemy to escape, and I declared to my host that I was determined to stay, leaving him quite at liberty to go back to his tent or to remain, as he pleased. Seeing, however, that he did not like to return alone, I pointed out to him a small but tolerably thick cluster of trees, into which he might go and hide himself in the best possible manner. Having reconnoitred my position, and ascertained—more however with my hands than with my eyes—the nature of the ground, I sat down upon a stone which commanded the

ford, the sloping sides of which were of somewhat steep ascent.

At about nine o'clock the lion roared on the other side of the stream. This time the roar did not in the least resemble those which I had previously heard. It was a regular *threat*, and one quite fitted to put the most resolute man out of countenance. I thought, in fact, that he had seen me and was going to pounce upon me.

The spot on which I was placed, the formidable voice of the monster, the intense darkness which surrounded me, every thing in short, contributed to impress me with awe. I felt my whole blood creeping back to my heart. But this sensation vanished almost immediately; and when I perceived the lion with his eyes glowing like two red-hot coals, descending towards the rivulet, I became completely impassible, whatever might prove to be the issue of the contest.

Some few minutes after, the lion entered the water, which I could hear plashing about under his heavy, regular steps; but it was impossible to see him; it was only when he arrived at about four or five paces from me that I saw his fiery eyes glaring again as before.

More than once I had shouldered my gun to try whether I could take aim. I could not even see the barrel! The lion's eyes, now at a standstill, were motionless, and of an awful fixity.

I endeavoured as well as I could to ascertain the direction of the body, and with head erect, and eyes wide open, I drew the trigger. The flash of the shot enabled me to see what I had to deal with, and at the same moment a tremendous roar, expressive of intense pain, announced to me that my ball had taken effect. I might have discharged my second barrel, but I preferred taking my chance of keeping it, in order not to be left entirely unarmed.

Having quickly drawn back my feet, which rested on a root growing out of the steep bank of the stream, I kept on the defensive. The lion roared, struggled, and floundered below me for a few minutes; then all was still.

A moment after, the Arab issued from his hiding-place,

and said, that to judge from the kind of roar which had followed my shot, the lion must be dead, or at least *hors de combat*. But not choosing to venture imprudently in such profound darkness, we returned to the douar to wait for daylight, which it may well be supposed I found very slow in appearing.

The first thing I perceived, on returning the following morning to the side of the stream, was the root upon which my feet had rested, the extremity of which had been cut clean off by the lion's teeth, and the slope torn up by his claws. A little below, close to the waterside, we found a pool of blood. As he had followed the course of the stream after being struck, no doubt to wash his wound, we did not succeed that day in discovering his track.

The following day a number of Arabs joined me to resume the search. By twelve o'clock we had beat up every wood in the neighbourhood, and I was preparing to return to Bone, convinced that the lion was dead somewhere, when I heard several shots fired, and loud shouts in the direction of the mountain.

On arriving at the spot I saw sixty horsemen flying at a swinging pace before the lion, who was charging them furiously. I immediately dismounted, and in spite of the Arabs, who made every effort to prevent me, I walked straight up to him, followed by Ahmed-ben-ali, who alone refused to abandon me.

By the time I had crossed a ravine which separated me from the lion, he had again retired into the wood, and was no where to be found. My companion, however, who had seen him creep under an enormous lentisc, assured me that he must still be there; and, in fact, he no sooner threw a stone towards it, than the lion made his appearance, fierce and threatening, at a distance of about ten paces from me. With his three sound legs he made a spring of four or five yards, and before he could try a second one, I gave him a shot about an inch under the right eye, which turned him over on the spot.

In an instant he rose again with the force and suddenness of a spring of steel; and as he reared up on his

hind legs, I sent him another bullet, which this time struck him full in the heart, and he fell at my feet a heavy mass, motionless and dead.

The first of my balls, the one he had received the previous night, had broken a shoulder; the second ball had been flattened on the bone,—without piercing it; the third only had caused death. Each shot had been fired at about five paces' distance. I perceived by these results that my projectiles had not a sufficient amount of penetrative power, and from that day I substituted an iron *ingot* for the ordinary ball.

CHAPTER VIII.

ANOTHER CAMPAIGN IN THE MAHOUNA.—MY FOURTH AND FIFTH LIONS.

IN the beginning of June, the same year, I was sent for by the inhabitants of the Mahcuna.

On the 18th of that month, at twelve o'clock at night, in bright moonlight, I met a young lion two years old, who lay across the path as he saw me coming up to him. I advanced to within fifteen paces without his condescending to take any notice of me;—a knowing piece of tactics, which made me deem it prudent not to advance any further; so putting one knee to the ground, I took a most careful aim behind the shoulder and fired.

How it happened I cannot tell, but so it was, that before I could see any thing, I found myself tossed over, and my hand encountered one of the legs of the lion, who held me sprawling under him. Fortunately for me, my head was covered with a turban composed of several folds of felt placed one above the other, by which means I remained unhurt. Quickly disengaging my endangered head from its envelope, which the lion was greedily lacerating with his teeth, I slipped cleverly out of my burrow, which I also abandoned to his fury. Thus freed

from his unpleasant grasp, I blew out the brains of this young madcap while he was still busy tearing away at my clothes!

The first ball had gone right through the lion from one side to the other, taking him behind the shoulder; the second had entered by the left and gone out by the right ear.

Not long after this I was again summoned by a cheik who inhabited the right bank of the Oued-cherf, by whom I was informed that a family of lions, occupying a spot situated near the river, were in the habit of attacking daily the herds of oxen which the Arabs brought there to drink. Having proceeded that same evening to a ford known under the name of Mejez-al-boulerbegh, I sat down near an oleander which commanded the ford, and waited the rising of the moon and the arrival of the lions.

Towards eleven o'clock I heard some steps in the underwood, and soon perceived several luminous points of a reddish glare advancing towards me. It was three lions of equal size, and about three years old. The father and mother were not with them, which I must confess, without any false shame, pleased me not a little.

The path which led to the ford was narrow, so that the three animals were marching in single file. The foremost on perceiving me stopped, as did his two companions, upon which I aimed at the first full in the shoulder and fired.

A long roar answered my shot; and when the smoke had blown away, I saw two of the lions making off sily into the wood, and the third, (who, after rolling down into the river, was returning upon me,) dragging himself along the ground.

Before I could load the barrel I had just discharged, the wounded lion was within three paces of me, showing me all his teeth. In a moment I gave him a second ball, which sent him, as the first had done, rolling down into the bed of the river.

Three times did he return, and it was only the third ball, which had entered quite close to the eye, that settled him effectually.

As soon as the lion ceased to give any sign of life, I rose to light up a fire the Arabs had prepared, and which was intended as a signal that the lion had been killed.

Immediately the distant report of a gun showed me that my signal had been understood; and until daybreak every hill of the Mahouna resounded with shots fired in the neighbouring douars as a sign of rejoicing. By dawn of day the Arabs were arriving by hundreds, and when their curiosity, which seemed always to augment, was satisfied, I returned to Guelma with my lion.

Two days after, I returned to the Mahouna, and spent several nights watching the fords and beating up the paths of the mountain, but all in vain;—I neither saw nor could learn from others any thing about the two brothers of my fifth victim.

CHAPTER IX.

INSTANCES SHOWING THE GREAT TENACITY OF LIFE IN THE LION.

ON the 2nd of August, in the same year, I happened to be again in that country, and one day while I was dining with Cheik Ahmeh-ben-amar, of the Outed-amiza, a lioness began to roar right below the douar, at about eight o'clock in the evening.

A quarter of an hour afterwards she had fallen under my first shot, fired at twelve paces. I waited for a moment, and then threw a large stone upon her, to make sure that she was quite dead. As she still remained motionless when the stone rebounded from her carcass, I approached boldly to look for my ball, which I found had entered the temple, but had not penetrated right through.

Not seeing the Arabs approach, I proceeded towards a small hillock where I could see the tents of the douar; and at the same moment the cheik and his men made

their appearance; after directing them to fetch a mule to carry away the carcass of the lioness, I turned back to the place where I had just left her. The Arabs, however, impatient to get a sight of her, had preceded me at full speed, and were crying, "Where is she? where is she? we don't see her!"

"There! there! before you, at your feet!" I exclaimed; "close to where you are standing!"

I cannot express the disappointment I felt on seeing the Arabs searching about in vain for the lioness, as well my own astonishment when I found myself treading on the very spot where she had fallen, where I had seen her dead, where I had actually touched her. She was gone; and yet it was not a dream,—my hand was still red with her blood, and the ground was soaked with it!

I spent a great part of the night in searching all over the neighbourhood, but, meeting with no success, I trusted to daylight to follow the spoor of the animal. A little before dawn, however, the sky became cloudy, and a heavy, tempestuous shower washed away all traces of the previous night. Some days after, the lioness was found dead nearly three miles from the point where I had shot her; a circumstance which, considering that she had gone over this long distance after a mortal wound, will give the reader some idea of the prodigious vitality of this animal.

In September, 1845, the tribe of Meizia came to ask my assistance against a large black lion, who was despoiling them without mercy.

After watching for him in vain during three nights near the douar which he was known more particularly to frequent, I studied his movements, and found that on leaving his place of resort, or on his returning thither, he always followed a particular path.

On the 19th, about nine at night, I descended into the ravine, called by the Arabs "the lion's garden," and took up my position on the very path I have mentioned, resting my gun upon a large stone by my side. Towards eleven o'clock I fancied I heard the enemy's steps; I was not mistaken, it was he.

When the lion came to within fifty yards of me, he stopped short, and began to roar. The country being so densely wooded and so very uneven, it was impossible for me to see the animal; but, by the peculiar nature of his roar, I perceived that he had become instinctively aware of my presence.

When I could fairly see him, there were only eight or ten yards between us; he was standing still, like myself, growling awfully with suppressed rage, and looking upon me with a most wicked eye.

The moon was favourable, and I had ample time to prepare for receiving him properly; so that the animal had scarcely caught sight of me when he received a ball in the forehead. With the very report of my gun, I felt a tremendous blow on the shoulder; the lion had bounded upon me with a roar, and before I could even fire off my second barrel, his breast struck against the stone, which with the shock fell over and covered me!

I was stretched on my side, and caught under this huge stone as under a trap; whilst the lion, stunned by the shot he had received, was there beside me; but too close to allow me the use of my gun. Upon this, I instantly seized my dagger, which I had previously taken out of the sheath, and gave the animal a tremendous stab right in the temple. In a moment he bolted up, and, as if he did not see me (which indeed I believe was the case), passed right over my body, stumbling about like a drunken man, and at last disappeared under the wood, carrying away with him two inches of my blade.

I got clear of this encounter,—certainly one of those in which I incurred the greatest danger, with only a few contusions on the shoulders and legs, and a slight wound in the head; and this, it will be agreed, was what may be called coming off with tolerably good fortune.

In fact, if the lion had not been so completely stunned by the ball he received in the forehead; if I had not been preserved from the first shock by the stone rolling over me; and, lastly, if after the blow of my dagger, he had not lost all notion of the presence of a man, I should, without doubt, have been crushed to pieces.

This lion was one of the handsomest I have ever seen.

His carcass did not remain in my hands, owing to the absence of my iron ingots, which I had forgotten on my way; but I have not the least doubt he died from his wounds, and I have only to regret not having killed on the spot an animal who had brought me and death so very near together.

All the Europeans I have heard talk about the lion and the manner of killing him, invariably seem to think that in an expedition of that sort it is sufficient to be courageous and calm, and that it is but a mere question of skill and habit. Indeed, to this day, there is not one of the officers in our African army who does not think so.

“The great thing,” say they, “is to be *sure of yourself*; that is the whole difficulty, and the whole secret of the business.”

To be *pretty sure of one's self*, is, if I am not mistaken, to be able to await the lion when you see or hear him coming; to go and meet him should he not come quick enough; to take a cool and steady aim, and to hit him at the exact point you intended.

But when you have done all this;—when you have, moreover, sufficient command over yourself to say, “I shall sit on this stone, or on this tuft of grass, and I shall kill or be killed, without moving one step backwards, without even rising when the lion charges me;” when you have done all this, I say,—by which you have only succeeded in killing, eight times out of ten, at the second or third ball,—then you cannot help coming to the conviction that dexterity, courage, and coolness are but accessories; and that, to come safely out of these but too unequal contests, you must also be aided by a higher power.

Indeed, every one can understand, without being a hunter, how much easier it must be to place well the first ball, when the animal is motionless, than the second one, whilst he is bounding; and if this first shot does not kill, it is certainly more than doubtful whether the second will be more effectual.

Already my experience had led me to trust in myself for two things only: first, to seek the lion,—then, to attack him boldly.

I entered on a campaign with *doubt* and *confidence*; with *doubt* as to the result to be produced by my shots; with *confidence* in the divine protection granted to his creature by the supreme Ruler of all things.

I have long sought for a comparison which might convey a proper idea of the encounter between a lion and a man; a man, armed with the very best of rifles; and a lion, armed with his teeth, his claws, and that prodigious vital power which makes him so formidable to all his opponents.

The following is the best I can suggest:—

Suppose a mortal duel, without witnesses, by night, in open forest, between two adversaries; the one, dressed as you are when you fight, which means, *very* lightly; the other, covered over with mail-armour from head to foot, and yet, like his enemy, quite free in all his movements, in spite of his thick cuirass. Put a sword in the hands of each of these two champions, and then tell the former that he may, *perhaps*, not be killed, if he succeeds in hitting his adversary in two small vulnerable points, which are more or less perceptible at the joints of his armour; suppose also a dexterity, a courage, and a coolness, equal in both these combatants; should the man with the armour be killed, will you not confess with me that his rival has been fortunate?

Let the case be stated several times over, always with the same conditions of improbable success, and you will perhaps be convinced at last, that it is not the *man* who thus kills, but the invisible hand which protects and guides him.

On reading these lines, some one may perhaps say, as I have many a time been told, "But how do the Arabs do when they manage to kill lions?" The answer is, "The Arabs catch lions in pits;" and when it happens that they kill one fairly and openly, without perching upon trees, or seeking shelter in regular forts, it is quite an exceptional circumstance; a contest in which many a life is lost, and often without their remaining masters of the field.

Let those who wish to judge with their own eyes come here, with my writings in their hands, and they will find

some *Bni-meloul*, some *Ouled-sassi*, or some *Chegatma*, who will relate their adventures, producing at the same time glorious scars, and who will even offer them a share in the sports, if they feel any inclination for it.

But let us return to our story without farther digression.

CHAPTER X.

A LIONESS PUT TO DEATH IN HER LAIR.

AFTER the above-mentioned encounter, I remained a few days longer in the Mahouna, waiting every morning under my tent for the reports of the Arabs who were out exploring the country. No lion, however, having appeared in these parts, I returned to Guelma towards the end of September; and it was not until after two months' rest that I received a fresh deputation from the mountaineers.

On reaching the high table-lands, I found snow on the ground to the depth of a foot; the thermometer had gone down much below zero, and the air was extremely keen. Notwithstanding this uncomfortable carpet, however, and this temperature so little congenial to those of her species (if we may believe our scientific naturalists), a lioness had settled in the country, and the douar where I was received had been visited by her almost every night.

Several paths led up to the tents, but she had adopted one of them in preference to all the others. It was on this one that I took up my position, at about a quarter of a league from the douar, having first agreed with the Arabs that, should the lioness threaten or attack the douar during my absence, a fire should be lighted to give me notice of the fact.

Towards ten o'clock the dogs gave the alarm, and shortly after I saw the signal agreed upon, when I im-

mediately set out, arriving just in time to hear the woful lamentations of a poor old woman, whom the lioness had bereaved of the only sheep she possessed.

In spite of the tears and complaints of this poor creature, and forgetting the cold which had almost benumbed me, I could not help laughing when, after calling a great booby, her own son, forty years old, *labe* and *coward*, I heard her say :

“ Ah ! ah ! this is what I call a man and a half ! Happy the woman who shall have him for a husband ;—she will have a protector indeed ;” adding with great seriousness, “ Oh ! if I could but turn young again, would not I marry him, although he be a Christian ! ”

“ To-morrow,” said I, to console the poor old creature, —“ to-morrow, if it please God, the lioness shall die, and you will have it in your power to make a meal of her flesh.”

“ Oh ! and that I will,” she exclaimed, joyfully, “ and I shall find it sweet as honey,—that *heartless* brute, who has devoured my poor little sheep ! ”

Upon this I left the *great booby* struggling with his *mamma*, and hastened to warm my limbs, which were almost dead with cold. On the following morning, as I was about to leave the tent, the old lady,—my *conquest* of the previous evening,—brought me cakes of her own making, with her best wishes for the happy success of the day.

I started, accompanied by several Arabs, and followed the spoor of the lioness, as she had left the douar. I perceived that she had taken a path parallel to that I had occupied, marching at a steady, regulated pace ; only she had stopped at times to shake off the snow, which, gathering around her paws, impeded her progress. It was only after we had proceeded nearly a couple of miles from our starting-point, that I found the spot on which she had made her dinner of the poor sheep, the only remains of which were its skin, most cleverly taken off and rolled up like a muff, and its trotters.

The skirts of the wood being only at a pistolshot from this spot, the Arabs deemed it more advisable to stop, and light a fire. Meantime I followed the lioness under

the wood, quite alone, and armed with a gun and my poniard, to which a fresh blade had been attached.

As I proceeded through the wood my progress became every moment more difficult, and I was soon obliged to divest myself of my burnous, which was constantly catching in the branches. At about a quarter of a league from the edge of the wood, I found the entrance into the lair of the lioness.

It consisted of a dense cluster of wild olive-trees, about a hundred yards in circumference, forming so thick a vault that the snow had not penetrated it. The steps of the lioness were distinctly traced on the ground.

The branches, which shot from the foot of every tree, and mingled like creepers, prevented me from walking upright, so that I had to proceed almost bent in two ; it was all, moreover, that I could do to see further than the length of my gun.

Knowing how heavy the slumbers of the lion are when he has just fed, I entertained hopes of finding my beast asleep, and of sending her to her ancestors before she could even open her eyes. With this view I proceeded step by step, very slowly, and with the least possible noise, leaning sometimes upon one hand, sometimes upon the other, sometimes also crawling on my knees, but always on the spoor of the lioness.

I now halted before an olive-tree, thicker than all the others, and under which the lioness had slipped, no doubt crawling like myself. In vain I strained my eyes to see through those branches; they formed an impenetrable curtain, behind which I could not possibly discern a single object.

And yet, judging from the small extent of the lair, the whole round of which I had performed before entering it, in order to make sure that the lioness had not gone through it, and considering the central point upon which I now stood, the animal could only be there under that thick cluster.

This involuntary reflection, occasioned by the pause I had been obliged to make, caused my heart to beat louder and quicker than was expedient at such a crisis, and in order to compose myself, I waited a few minutes without stirring.

When I had become quite myself again, I carefully put aside the branches with the end of my barrels, and judge how well I had guessed! I saw the lioness stretched on one side, at about five or six paces from me; her head leaning on one of her paws, and sound asleep.

I prepared to fire.

But when I had shouldered my gun, and was about to take my aim, I found myself in a terrible dilemma. The lioness was lying so as to present her whole body; and forced as I was to fire kneeling, I feared that the horizontal position of the animal might spoil the effect of my ball, which would certainly go through, but might not kill on the spot.

One may truly affirm that, in presence of an imminent danger, indecision and precipitation are equally dangerous, and on this occasion again I was happily inspired; rather than send a doubtful ball into the middle of the body, the jaws, or the very uncertain region of the heart, I resolved to wake up the lioness, so as to fire at the head the moment she rose; and moreover, in order that her waking should be calm and natural, I acted with the greatest precaution.

While my left hand held my gun ready shouldered, with my right I broke a small branch.

The lioness did not move.

I snapped a larger one.

My hand had not recovered the stock of my gun, when the lioness was already on her belly, with eyes awfully distended, ears reclining backwards, lips curled up, and her penetrating glance peering into every corner of her chamber with a fixity and deliberation truly appalling.

Before she could detect me, I aimed at her right eye, and pressed the trigger.

The smoke at first prevented me from seeing the effect of my shot, but I heard a short stifled roar, which seemed to me a good prognostic, and very soon I could see the lioness stretched out on the very spot where I had shot her.

Her flanks, however, were beating still, and the legs were agitated by abrupt convulsive movements, which

showed me that she was as yet only stunned, and that she might be up in an instant. Wrapping up my left arm with my turban, which I rapidly unfolded, and holding my gun in my right, I entered into the chamber of the lioness; then, without one second's delay, placed the end of my barrel in her ear and fired.

The "*heartless*" one had finished her career, and the old woman with the sheep was avenged.

My first shot had entered the corner of the eye, and had come out at the top of the head, ploughing up the skull, but without actually piercing through it.

An hour after, that part of the forest, but so little before silent and respected, was resounding with confused clamour; and the lioness, carried on a litter of large branches, arrived at the douar, amidst an immense concourse of her foes. In the evening a black bull was killed, as a sign of rejoicing, on the tomb of Sidi-amar, a personage much venerated in the country, and the whole night was given up to feasting and revelry.

The glare of so many fires lighting up these groups, the trees, the snow, and the tombs, amidst which the women were preparing and distributing the flesh of the bull and of the lioness; all this was one of the most fantastic pictures one could conceive, and well worthy of an artist's pencil.

Whilst we were sitting round an immense flaming fire, sufficient to roast an elephant, Abdallah, the singer, was composing some extempore verses on the event, and a little farther on a fute-player was showing off his talent. Here, the women were chattering, discussing between them their favourite theme; there, the men were conversing, talking of course about powder, lions, and slaughter of some kind or other. Then, like phantoms, clothed in their white burnous, all might be seen starting up at one and the same time, looking almost like a resurrection of the dead. The women set up their shrill, piercing war-cries, to which the men answered by shots, repeated by every echo in the mountain.

As for me, the night of the 5th of December, 1845, was, I confess, a night of truly pleasant remembrance. I shall

not soon forget the memorable banquet offered to me by those grateful mountaineers, on the snow and under the bright canopy of heaven.

When the last stars had disappeared before the dawn, the women retired under their tents, and the men, gathered round the tomb of Sidi-amar, listened devoutly to a morning prayer recited aloud by a marabout. Every one then came to bid me adieu, and I mounted my horse to depart, with a heart happy and contented, not only with what I had done, but also with what I had seen.

The physical powers of man, however, have their limit, and cannot be overworked with impunity. From my first excursion up to the present period, I had spent upwards of a hundred and fifty nights in the open air, sometimes sitting at the corner of some glade, sometimes beating up the paths across the hills, always on foot, and crossing torrents, rivers, and streams of all descriptions, exactly as if they were dry roads. On the other hand, I was rather indifferently fed; for although, in the substantial line, the Arabs did offer me a most plentiful and generous hospitality, absorbed as I was by one fixed idea, I seldom made use of these comforts, and the national cake almost always satisfied my hunger, as the fountain sufficed to quench my thirst. And, lastly, from the moment I entered upon a campaign until my return to camp, I was constantly, it must be granted, under the weight of rather violent and dramatic emotions.

I am not aware if there exists any constitution stout enough or tough enough to bear up against such exertions, but for myself, I returned this time to Guelma seriously ill.

CHAPTER XI.

ABDALLAH, THE SINGER.

IN the meantime, and whilst I am trying to recruit somewhat my shattered health, before resuming my wild

career, allow me, dear reader, to mention to you two personages present at our banquet of the Mahouna.

The first is that same Abdallah, the extempore singer, of whom I have already spoken.

One day, or rather one evening, on returning from a feast to which he had been invited, he saw a troop of wild boars busily engaged in rooting up his corn-field. To run to the douar, to drop the flute, and to pick up the gun, was the work of less time than I have taken to mention it; and as soon as five or six neighbours had joined him they all marched off together against the wild boars, who, once well filled, had walked off without waiting till they should be asked to pay the bill of fare.

Instead of the wild boars, Abdallah, who was leading the column, saw a young lioness crouching down, and quietly eyeing him as he approached. He stopped to point her out to his companions, who said to him laughing:

“Well, since she has done you the honour to come and rest in your field, be polite, and just sing her a tune.”

Abdallah was put on his mettle by this joke, and perceiving that he had to do with a beast not yet full grown, he stepped up to her, hoping, no doubt, she would not wait for him.

When he had arrived at about fifty yards from her, he began singing some verses commencing with these words:

“Oh! thou, who art nothing without thy mate,
Why is he not with thee?”

but had scarcely finished, when the lioness rushed on him with head lowered and ears reclining backwards.

Abdallah is neither cowardly nor unskilful.

He put one knee to the ground, and when the lioness was about ten paces off, sent three balls into the middle of her breast.

As ill luck would have it, however, this compliment did not prevent the animal from proceeding straight on,

nor from hurling to the ground the unfortunate hunter and planting her terrible claws in his shoulders, whilst her four canine teeth were laying open the throat which had insulted her. Then, as the man gave no more sign of life, the lioness quietly retreated, stopping every now and then to lick the blood which streamed from her wounds.

As soon as the enemy had disappeared, the Arabs, who had kept at a distance, came up to Abdallah and carried him home, thinking they had brought back a corpse. They were mistaken, however; thanks to the care of a physician of the country, and still more to a robust constitution, the man recovered after a treatment of some years.

When I knew him, his wounds were not yet quite healed, though they did not prevent him from singing, if not agreeably, at least with a loud and strong voice. And, as with the Arabs, he who makes the most noise is reputed by far the most brilliant performer, the consequence is that Abdallah, to this very day, occupies a very distinguished rank amongst his rivals in the vocal art.

As he entertains at the bottom of his heart a pretty considerable grudge against the whole family of lions, great or small, male or female, which may easily be conceived after such an unpleasant encounter, Abdallah has taken a prodigious fancy to me, on account of the determined war I have declared against the species, and, at every fresh victim, he is always the first to rejoice, and to extemporize for me fresh verses.

CHAPTER XII.

MY FRIEND MOHAMMED-BEN-OUMBARK.

THE second personage I wish to introduce to my reader is Mohammed-ben-oumbark, who, like Abdallah, inhabits the southern declivity of the Mahouna.

This man is neither more nor less than a professed robber *retired from business*; but a robber celebrated for his craft and audacity.

We became acquainted with each other under the following circumstances:

At the time of my second excursion in the Mahouna, I had during the day reconnoitred a ravine, at the bottom of which several paths united at the same ford, which ford seemed to me much frequented by the lion, whom I was then diligently searching for.

In the evening a little before dark, I went and settled myself there quite comfortably. Towards eleven o'clock I heard a sound, at first rather vague, then more distinct, on one of the paths leading to my post.

This spot is so very steep and densely wooded, that not a single ray of light could penetrate into it by day, far less by night; so that to come off with success in the present business, I had to trust exclusively to my ears.

I was quietly seated, leaning against the trunk of a tree planted on the edge of the ravine, and so completely covered right and left by two bushes, that I could neither see nor be seen by any one until the individual should almost touch the end of my barrels.

The sound approached by degrees; but the steps seemed to me less heavy than those of a lion, in those rough, stony roads, where the least noise is heard so far off. At the very moment I was making that inward reflection I heard a cough.

The lion often sneezes, but I never heard him cough; at any rate, considering the noise he makes when he does sneeze, this sound was much too weak to come out of his throat, his chest, or his lungs.

"It is not a lion," said I to myself, "it is a man; but then, who is the fellow who, at such an hour, would dare to venture into such a place?"

I concluded that I was going to meet with a marauder of the most dangerous sort, and I must say, I was much annoyed at it. Being probably destined often to visit those parts, I was most anxious, politically speaking, not to shed the blood of any native, and yet I was to a certain degree forced to do so on this occasion. I resolved,

however, before coming to this unpleasant extremity, to try the plan of *surprise*, which is the natural consequence of an unexpected attack.

I placed beside me my gun with both barrels ready cocked, put my naked dagger in my belt, then slipped off my burnous, which I kept unfolded, awaiting the arrival of the marauder. The moment he came nose to nose with me, I threw my burnous over his head and seized him round the body.

The word *traitor* was the first he pronounced. But it was not exactly the moment for playing about words, so making use of my advantage, (I told you I was pretty well skilled in pugilistic exercises,) I tripped up his heels, and holding him tight as he lay, I said:

"Fear nothing, I am Gerard: down with your weapons!"

That instant the fellow ceased to struggle.

Five minutes after, we were smoking from the same pipe near a bright fire, by the light of which I was able to survey my new acquaintance.

He was a man of the ordinary size, spare, muscular, and with an expressive, agreeable countenance. I was particularly struck with the expression of his blue eyes when he became animated in speaking; in short, an hour after our meeting, which might have been rather a serious one for one of us, we were two regular chums, bating the superiority which, in my quality of a *Frenchman hunting the lion*, I could not decline, and which, at any rate, Mohammed, *the marauder*, most readily acknowledged at the very outset.

We spent the whole night together, which I turned to good account, by making him relate to me some of his adventurous expeditions.

Ever since the beginning of our acquaintance, Mohammed-ben-oumbark never fails to come and see me when he knows I am in the country, and it is almost always during the night, in the open forest, that he prefers paying me his respects; in fact, he says to whoever will listen to him, that he is my most devoted friend, that he would kill like a dog any one bold enough to hurt one

hair of my head; and in short, his last word is, "That there are only two men on this earth: *I and he!*"

Now that, under the improving influence of civilization, my friend has adopted a more regular kind of life; now that he has renounced for ever his former courses, and made his peace with the police, who had become justly alarmed at his wandering habits; now, in short, that the vagabond has completely reformed, I can, without indiscretion, tell the reader a few of the stories he related to me, and which are all known by the inhabitants of the Mahouna, who had been accustomed to live in mortal dread of our hero for a period of full fifteen years.

Mohammed-ben-oumbark belonged to a tolerably rich family, which had been stripped of all its property by the chief of that country, before the French occupation. After the death of his father, he found himself with no other fortune than a young and pretty wife, a tent in very bad condition, and a beautifully sharp yatagan.

"*With this,*" said he, showing it to his better half, "I will procure for you a fine tent, numberless flocks, and make you as rich as those who have robbed us of our patrimony." And without delay he set to work.

The French troops destined for the first expedition to Constantine, were at that time gathering at the camp of Mejez-amar; and as all the surrounding tribes were as yet unsubdued, the officers were much at a loss to procure horses and mules. Mohammed-ben-oumbark saw this, and determined to furnish them.

With that boldness which never forsook him, he presented himself at the outposts, was arrested, and brought before the commanding officer. There he at once declared that he belonged to an unsubdued tribe, but that he offered his services to the French, and engaged to furnish them with all they wanted in the way of saddle-horses, and beasts of burden. His apparent frankness pleased the officers; his offers were accepted; and the very next day he proved by the delivery of a first supply what he was capable of doing.

From that day he received regular orders, exactly as

if he had possessed large stables of his own. They had but to name the age and colour of the horse wanted, and the next day he made his appearance with the animal.

To answer all these demands, Mohammed used to practise sometimes on the Arabs, sometimes on the Kabyles.

The former tie their horses with a rope fixed to the ground by two pickets, inside or outside the tents, but oftener outside; and the way to succeed in stealing a horse is to get at them unseen, and to retire in the same way. It may be conceived that this is not the easiest thing in the world, especially in a camp peopled by a multitude of dogs, ever on the watch; but this was only child's play for our robber.

The trick was still more difficult to perform with the Kabyles, who live in houses or *gourbis*, closed with doors, and without windows.

The way in which Mohammed proceeded with the latter was as follows:

With the agility and cunning of a cat, he ascended to the roof of the house in which was the beast he wished to secure. After making a sufficiently large aperture, he let himself down into the only room, to the imminent hazard of dropping, like a bad dream, on the very stomach of the master of the house. Once introduced, he felt about for the fireplace, blew up some half-extinguished embers, so as to be able to direct his movements, opened the door, and marched off with the animal of his choice.

If one of the inhabitants seemed disposed to wake up, Mohammed quickly laid down close to him, snoring as if he had really been a member of the family. If the sleeper fairly opened his eyes, oh! then, woe to him! the yatagan played its part, and closed them for ever.

One night, while he was busy blowing up a brand of half-burnt wood in the fireplace of one of his neighbours, who had the unpardonable impudence to possess a horse much too handsome for him, a sound of voices was heard outside, and some one knocked at the door. Instantly the three or four men who were in the room jumped up; but whilst they were hesitating in the dark and counting themselves, Mohammed, changing his voice, said coolly:

"Don't disturb yourselves, I will go and see who comes there."

At the same time he opened the door, and perceiving two horsemen who had already dismounted:

"Be welcome," said he to them; "pray walk in, and I will take charge of your beasts."

The strangers accepted the invitation, and the robber, vaulting rapidly on one of the horses, and taking the other by the reins, called out to the proprietor of the house:

"I say! such a one! take good care of your guests, my boy; and pray tell them that Mohammed-ben-oumbark has taken charge of their horses." So saying, he put spurs to the horse, and vanished.

Things, however, did not always go on so smoothly; and during the course of his stormy career, my honourable friend has suffered by fire or by steel more than enough to damage irretrievably the skin of any honest man.

One day I asked him how the lions, which he must necessarily have met in the night more than once, had behaved to him: he replied with enthusiasm:

"*The lion is all! man is nothing!* The lion is strong, the lion is courageous; the lion alone knows how to kill, and to inspire respect and fear! . . . Men," he added, "should be governed by a lion."

"Then you never had any occasion to complain of him?"

"Never!" said Mohammed; "on the contrary, he has very often assisted me in my nocturnal expeditions, by throwing terror and disorder among the inhabitants of the douar which I was about to plunder. Whilst he was killing on one side, I was stealing on the other!"

"It is very true that whenever I happened to meet him fasting, and he has invited me to divide with him, I never refused him. On one occasion only I found him somewhat unreasonable. It was on the eve of the El-ád-kebir. As every proper Mussulman is expected to kill a sheep on that day, I, who am not fond of seeing my flock diminish, had gone and borrowed one in a neighbouring douar, and was returning home, with my booty across my shoulders, when I met a lion.

“‘My lord,’ I said to him, ‘this time, I am exceedingly sorry for it, but you cannot have my sheep; I must keep it for to-morrow,—the great feast.’”

“The lion, pretending not to understand, was becoming more and more pressing; upon which I left the path to take refuge in a cavern which I knew of close at hand, intending to wait there until daybreak, and then to proceed on my way.

“Before entering the grotto I looked behind me; the lion had disappeared. But knowing my gentleman too well to believe that he could be far away, at the end of an hour I thought I had better take a peep at what was going on outside.

“I had reached the entrance of the cavern with great precaution, holding on each side with both hands, and bending my head cautiously forward, when I felt myself violently caught at by the hood of my burnous, and I had just time enough to disengage my head, not to be lifted fairly up into the air. The lion, in short, who had laid himself down on the top of the rock, had stretched out one of his huge paws like a cat, and seizing hold of my burnous, had begun to tear it with his teeth, giving every sign of anger.

“In I hurried again, and threw out the sheep he had set his mind upon, and on which he darted immediately, without the least scruple;—more than this, he had the extreme indelicacy to devour it under my very eyes; and when at last he thought proper to decamp, with his stomach full, and without ever condescending to turn round to say ‘*thank you*,’ leaving on one side the reeking remains of his supper, and on the other the bits of my tattered burnous, the day was just beginning to dawn.

“He had not even left me time enough, the thief! to go back to my neighbour to take another sheep; so that, on returning home, I had to pick out and kill one of my own flock, as every good Mussulman is bound to do on such a day. It was the first time, since I became a man, that I had been driven to such an extremity, and the lion alone could have forced me to do so.”

Such is the second personage I meant to depict here, as a tolerably original sketch of Arabian customs; and now, with your leave, kind reader, we will resume our excursions at the point where we broke off.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE STORY OF A FOUNDLING.

A FEW weeks' rest was sufficient to restore me to health, and enable me to take the field again.

One day in February, 1846, M. de Tourville, commander-in-chief of the circle of Guelma, sent for me to say that the tribe of the Beni-foughal had asked my assistance to rid them of a lioness and her cubs, which had settled amongst them.

An hour afterwards I was on horseback with the cheik of the tribe, and in the evening we arrived at his douar, situated at the foot of the Jebel-meziour. On the following day, at the earliest dawn, in searching the bush in which the lioness had concealed her young ones, I found under a thick cluster of heath, upon a bed of leaves carefully arranged, a small lioness, one month old, the size of an Angora cat.

After carrying this beast to a douar, established on the side of the hill, I went back to the heath, to await the return of the lioness.

At the moment I entered the forest, the sun was setting in the horizon, and I hastened on to the heath I have already mentioned, where I sat down near a cork-tree which stood close by. Observing, however, that the thickness of the wood was such that I could not possibly take an aim either before or on either side of me, I proceeded by means of a double-edged poniard to cut all the branches which were in my way, and soon found myself in the centre of a small opening, extending all around

as far as the length of my gun barrels. This done, I sat down near the tree to wait for the arrival of the animal.

My plan of attack was simple enough. No sooner should the lioness show her head between the heath-bushes, than I proposed to blow her brains out with a close shot.

The night being now come, I directed my whole attention to the various sounds which were heard among the wood. At one time, it was a rattoon leaving his lair, whose steps on the leaves made me fancy at first it was my beast. At another, it was a jackal roving about me in search of the remains of the provisions brought by the lioness to her cubs; but there was no danger of mistaking this animal for her I was in search of, as I distinctly heard the jackal gnawing away at the bones which were scattered here and there around.

During two long hours I had impatiently endured this suspense; at last I made up my mind to it, and my wearied arm being unable longer to keep my gun shouldered, I leant against the tree, resolved to wait until the eyes of the lioness should lend me their light and dispel this awful darkness.

A short digression is indispensable here, to explain to the reader how it was that the tribe of the Beni-foughal had sought my assistance on this occasion.

In March, 1840, a lioness had selected this same bush, where I now found myself at a period of six years after, to deposit her young ones; and the same cheik who had called for me at Guelma, had gathered about sixty guns in order to search the wood.

Two cubs were discovered, and the joyous band were retiring in merry triumph, when the lioness arrived, and bounding into the midst of the depredators, tore to pieces the bravest of them all; and although she was at last mortally wounded, killed a second man, on whose body she expired in her turn.

This anecdote had been related to me, on my arrival in the douar, at great length, and with its most minute details; and I had listened to it with the more interest, as they who recounted it were the very actors in this terrible

drama, and as one of the victims who had survived the first attack was there, in a sadly mutilated state, showing to me, one by one, twenty wounds of the most terrible description.

The remembrance of this unfortunate encounter, fresh in the minds of these men, had protected this lioness and her family against any similar attempt; but as their proximity had become sorely expensive to the tribe, they had thought proper to call me to their assistance.

It might be eight o'clock in the evening when I heard in the distance some apparently heavy steps, accompanied by a great noise among the branches. As the sounds approached, I judged that the steps must be those of an animal of large size, and I soon felt convinced it must be the lioness.

At a distance of six paces the beast stopped short. Fearing then lest she might have seen or scented me, and that she would clear at one bound the distance between us, I rose quickly, hoping to see, at least, her eyes. I stood thus, leaning against the trunk of the tree, my gun ready shouldered, my finger on the trigger, and my eye fixed on a curtain of heath higher than myself and thick as a wall, but I saw nothing, heard nothing.—

My imagination, assisted by the remembrances of the past, dived irresistibly through the darkness and all the obstacles which hindered my sight, and showed me the lioness with her neck stretched out, her ears bent backwards, her whole body convulsed with rage, ready to spring. Such illusions often haunt the hunter through the long wearisome hours of a night watch.

My uncertainty seemed to me intolerably tedious. In spite of the bitter cold, I felt the perspiration gathering in large pearly drops on my forehead, and my nerves were beginning to give way, when a thought rapid as lightning shot across my mind, restoring calm to the body, and composure and confidence to the heart.

“Why,” thought I, “did I not ascend that tree, instead of remaining here on the ground? And, even now, what prevents me springing up on the first branches and seating myself at ten yards from the ground? Who will see me? Who will ever know it? Another in my

place, would he not do it at this moment, if he had not already done it?"

I feel truly happy in writing these lines now, after an interval of eight years,—marked by violent emotions and more than one drama appalling in its *dénouement*,—I am happy, I say, to retrace my impressions in that solemn moment. The reason is, that then, more than before, I *understood* the difference between the man who exposes his life in broad daylight and before witnesses, and the man who is unseen by all but himself, and has only the stars of heaven to light him.

The satisfaction of having never thought of the tree during the day, and of considering it an unworthy action to perch myself upon it, even at the most perilous moment, infused into me a calm and assurance worthy to be tested by a still more serious trial.—

Let the reader judge of my disappointment when, instead of the tremendous roar of a lioness charging me with all the fury of a mother defending her young ones, I heard only the plaintive, hungry cry of a cub looking out for its nurse.

To this very day I cannot help laughing, as I did then, on thinking of the emotions with which this little rogue had made my heart beat.

For want of any thing better, I took hold of the cub, and after placing it in the skirts of my burnous, I sought the road in order to go and deposit him in the douar where his sister was already housed.

After three or four hours' marching through woods and ravines, after many a halt occasioned by sounds which I could not at first well distinguish, and which seemed to me sometimes the distant roar, sometimes the furious gallop of the lioness in chase, I was at last guided by the barking of the dogs, and reached in safety the douar, where my first care was to examine my beast and to compare it with my previous capture.

It was a male cub, one-third larger than the other, and much handsomer. I gave him the name of Hubert, out of reverence for the great patron of hunters.

Whilst the young lioness hid herself carefully from every glance, and received with her claws those who

touched her, Hubert would sit or lie down before the fire, looking rather astonished, but not in the least savage. The women could not sufficiently caress him, and, as a reward for his amiability, they brought him, though after much resistance on her part, a fine goat full of milk.

The poor beast being laid on her side, and kept down by two Arabs, who prevented her making any movement, they presented one of her teats to Hubert, who at first did not appear to understand what he was to do. The first drops of milk, however, no sooner moistened his lips, than he stuck to his new nurse with amazing steadiness. As to the lioness, notwithstanding her brother's good example, she obstinately refused to do the same, and was only quiet when she could hide herself and be left alone.

Hubert spent the remainder of the night under my burnous, as peacefully as if he had been with his mother.

The next morning, accompanied by all the men of the country, I searched carefully, but in vain, every part of the mountain; and in the evening, after sharing the dinner of a shepherd whom I met on my road, I returned to my post of the previous night. Here I waited without success until dawn; no lioness appeared.

I was afterwards informed that she had left the country immediately after the loss of the first cub, carrying a third one away with her.

The Beni-foughal being now completely reassured by the capture of the two cubs, and especially by their mother's departure, I left them, in order to return to Guelma with my two adopted pets.

The lioness died some time after my return, from the consequences of a too laborious dentition, which is a period extremely critical, and often fatal for these young female animals.

As for Hubert, he grew and throve beautifully, and very soon the milk of several goats was found insufficient to satisfy his voracious appetite.

I imagine that the various steps in the education of this young lion will not be without interest, and especially to those who knew him.

Anticipating, therefore, slightly both events and dates,

I will give a short account of his history, from the time of his installation at the camp of Guelma until his death, which took place at the Jardin des Plantes, in Paris.

Hubert's arrival was quite a godsend for all my comrades.

Among his friends (and he very soon numbered a good many) Hubert counted three intimate ones; they were, Lehman, the trumpeter, Bibart, the farrier, and the Spahi Rostain, who, a year after, was mutilated before my eyes and in spite of my balls, by the lion of Mejez-amar.

Hubert had a certificate book upon which he was at first inscribed as a second-class trooper, waiting for advancement, and every remarkable achievement was faithfully registered in the book, with his services and actions.

The following are some of the honourable mentions inscribed upon Hubert's book :

"1st. On the 20th of April, 1846, (Hubert was only three months old,) the troop being mounted in the court of the barracks ready to proceed to the exercising ground, the trumpeters sound the general roll-call.

"The trooper Hubert, finding himself locked up in his room, situated on the second-floor, jumps to the window, and cries out, 'Here!'

"But he is not heard, and is put down as absent.

"The captain commands, 'By four, march!' and the trumpets sound, 'Forward!'

"Upon this, the trooper Hubert, without ever looking right or left, bolts out clean in the middle of the court, in presence of the whole troop.

"Thanks to this manifest act of good will, Hubert is *not* put down as absent to the call.

"2nd. On the 15th of May, 1846, Hubert, having strangled the goat, his nurse, is named first-class trooper..

"On the 8th of September, in the same year, Hubert makes a sally on the market-place, attacks the Arabs, puts them to flight, kills several sheep and a donkey, knocks over the guard, and only surrenders to his friends Lehman, Bibart, and Rostain, who had run out to bring him to his senses again."

In consequence of this achievement, Hubert is forthwith named corporal, a *chain of honour* is placed round his neck, and he is appointed permanently on guard at the entrance to the stable.

“3rd. On the 10th of January, 1847, a Bedouin having crept in, to come and rove about among the troop-horses, Hubert, who smells the marauder, snaps his chain, hurls him to the ground, and carries him into his sentry-box, awaiting the arrival of the officer of the round to make his report, and to give up his prisoner, *in extremely bad condition.*”

This deed advanced Hubert to the grade of sergeant, and procured him *two* chains of honour, instead of one.

At last, in April, 1847, Hubert, after strangling a horse, and tearing two soldiers to shreds, is named officer, and locked up in a cage.

Poor Hubert! and it was I, his best friend, who had the charge of this painful commission.

The authorities, kind and indulgent for his first peccadilloes, had forgiven him many a misdeed by reason of his general amiability; but in presence of such acts they could not shut their eyes, and he had therefore nothing to expect but death or perpetual confinement.

My first thought was to set him free; but I was afraid that, accustomed to the contact of men, he would return to the camp, or to the environs, and come to a bad end.

At first, to soften his captivity, I used to come during the night near his cage, which I opened; he would then bound out full of joy, and embrace me with every mark of affection, and we would play for a while at hide-and-seek.

One evening, in one of his gay fits, he embraced me so tightly and so vigorously that he would have suffocated me to a dead certainty, but for the timely interference of a powerful application of sword-scabbards, which had been hastily brought to my rescue. That was the last time we ever played at that game together.

And yet, I must do him the justice to say that he had no bad intentions, since in our gambols, he carefully

avoided making use of his teeth and claws, either with me or with the persons whom he was in the habit of seeing, and towards whom he was always very mild and affectionate.

Feeling dull and miserable at never being let out, but tied with an enormous chain fixed at the bottom of his cage, the poor animal became morose, and sometimes impatient and passionate. His temper was soured, and I thought that I had better part with him.

An officer offered to buy him for 3000 francs, in the name of the King of Sardinia; but I could not consent to sell Hubert, my nursling, any more than the spoils of the lions I had killed, so I declined the offer.

The Duke d'Aumale, however, having honoured me by his kindness, I offered Hubert to his royal highness, begging the prince to permit that he should be placed in the experimental gardens at Algiers, and in such a way as to secure him a comfortable existence.

CHAPTER XIV.

MY NURSLING LEAVES GUELMA FOR PARIS.—OUR RECOGNITION AT THE JARDIN DES PLANTES.

IN October, 1847, Hubert left Guelma, to the immense regret of the ladies, towards whom he had ever proved particularly gallant, and of the military of every grade, who were almost as fond of him as I could be myself.

Lehman and Bibart had both got thoroughly tipsy, the better to support the pangs of separation; but they proved notwithstanding to be so much affected, that they had to be put under lock and key, in order that Hubert might be allowed peacefully to take his departure.

On arriving at Algiers, he was found too large and too handsome to remain at the experimental gardens, and I was asked to take charge of him to France.

Poor animal! he was indeed too large, since a horse's collar was too small for his neck; he was far too handsome, moreover, for the wretched life to which he was henceforth condemned!

The commander of the ship in which Hubert was embarked, allowed me to keep his cage open during a few hours, at the time he took his meals. Strong cables, placed at a certain distance from the cage, prevented the curious from exposing themselves too near.

As soon as his door was opened, Hubert would come out, and after thanking me in his own way, walk about the deck as far as the length of his chain permitted him. Then they brought him a slice of beef, about ten pounds in weight, which he disposed of very cleanly; and afterwards laid himself down in the sun to digest at his ease.

When the recreation time was passed, he returned to his cell rather unwillingly, after which he waited pretty patiently for the dinner hour. It was thus that his last happy days were spent.

On reaching Toulon, we were obliged to part, as he was going to Marseilles, and I to Cuers to pay a visit to my family.

Amidst the happiness I felt in seeing my relations again, I nevertheless found a sort of blank; there was something missing. I went to Marseilles also; only a very few weeks had elapsed since I had seen my nursling: alas! he was no longer the same.

After the first flash of joy which for one instant gleamed over his beautiful head, he seemed melancholy, suffering, and low-spirited. His look seemed to say, "Why did you leave me? where am I? where are they taking me? You have returned now, but will you stay with me?"

I felt so much to see the poor animal thus miserable, that I had not the courage to prolong my visit, and I left him abruptly.

As I was going away I heard him bound in his cage and roar with fury; presently I came back, and no sooner did he see me again than he became calm, and laid himself close to the bars, to enable me to caress him with my hand.

A few minutes after he was asleep, and I retired on

tiptoe for fear of disturbing his repose. Sleep is often oblivion for animals as well as for men!

Three months after this last interview, I was in the capital.

The very morning of my arrival in Paris, on the 31st of December, 1847, I called on M. Léon Bertrand, editor of the "Journal des Chasseurs."

To every lord let due honour be paid.

It seemed to me that the cynegetic writer whose name is now celebrated among all those who carry a gun or a hanger; that the founder and successful editor of a special review, certainly unrivalled amidst those of a similar kind which are published in Europe, and in which all the masters of the science, such as Elzéar Blaze, Deyeux, Toussenel, d'Houdetot, Lavallée, de Foudras, and many others, have felt it an honour to inscribe their names along with those of the first sportsmen of the day; that the hunter, in short, whose relations extend from one hemisphere to the other (I have seen letters written from the most remote parts of Siberia, in which he is designated our living Saint Hubert); it seemed to me, I say, that this man, of all others, had the most incontestable right to my first visit.

I had not as yet the advantage of knowing him personally, although a correspondence, frequently repeated, and equally friendly on both sides, had already revealed to me the man, and attached me to him by one of those sympathetic friendships, which, once established, are seldom broken. We had scarcely conversed an hour, when we felt that we were two friends,—two brothers. Are there not some exceptional natures created to understand and love each other at first sight,—at the first hearty shake of the hands?

The next day, the 1st of January, 1848, we proceeded together to the Jardin des Plantes, in company with a lady and her daughter, who were desirous to be present at my first interview with Hubert.

On entering the gallery called *des bêtes féroces*, I was surprised at the state of the cages in which the animals are condemned to live in fatal inactivity. I was painfully impressed especially by the pestilential odour they

exhale, causing a corrupt atmosphere which the hyenas,—dirty and impure beasts if ever there were any,—may perhaps endure, but which must necessarily destroy the lions and panthers, those splendid animals, with their neat, well polished coats, who are cleanliness itself.

Indeed, I never could understand how, in a zoological garden like ours, which ought to be the first establishment of the kind in the world, the bears are allowed to parade about in spacious, comfortable dens in the open air, while the lions are suffered to pine away in narrow cages, deprived of all those conditions of air and space, in the absence of which they can neither thrive, grow, nor strengthen.

This, which strikes every visitor, gave me an opportunity of offering to M. Geoffroy Saint Hilaire a few practical observations, which he received with extreme condescension ; and I ought to add, that but for the events of 1848, Hubert and his companions would certainly have obtained what I solicited for them.

While still under the painful influence which had oppressed me at my entrance, I was slowly progressing towards my lion's cage.

He was lying down, half asleep, staring vacantly on the persons who had preceded me. All of a sudden he raises his head ; his eyes are dilated ; a nervous movement contracts every muscle of his face ; the tip of his tail trembles ; he has seen the spahi uniform, but he has not yet recognized his old master. In the meantime his anxious glance was surveying me from head to foot, as if he was striving to recall some remembrance. I came close to him, and, unable longer to contain my emotion, I stretched out my hand to him through the bars of his cage.

This was indeed a truly touching moment for me and for all those present. Without ceasing to devour me with his eyes, Hubert applied his nose to my hand and began to inhale deeply, while at each inspiration his eye became more clear, more soft, more affectionate. Under the uniform, which he had at once recognized, he was now beginning to recognize the friend ; and I saw that one word would suffice to dispel every remaining doubt.

“Hubert !” I said, caressing him, “my old soldier !”

It was enough. With one furious bound he sprang against the iron bars of his prison, which groaned and shook again under this powerful shock.

My friends, frightened at the moment, had drawn back hastily, entreating me to do the same.

Noble animal! who spreads terror and awe even in the rapturous bursts of his affection!

Hubert was standing up, clinging to the bars, endeavouring to break the obstacle which separated us. In this position he looked truly magnificent, roaring with mingled joy and anger. His powerful tongue was licking in blissful happiness the hand I had given up to him, whilst his enormous paws were softly trying to draw me towards him.

If any one else attempted to come near, Hubert broke out into a most appalling fury; but as soon as they retired he became calm and affectionate as before.

I cannot express how painful our parting was on that day. Twenty times I returned to try and make him comprehend that he should see me again; and every time I withdrew he shook the whole gallery with his tremendous bounds and roars.

For some time after I paid frequent visits to the prisoner, and we often spent several hours alone together. But I soon observed that he was getting low,—in fact, pining away; and on consulting the men who had charge of him, they seemed to attribute it to my presence, upon which I thought it better to visit him less frequently.

One day in the month of May I came as usual.

“Sir,” said the keeper, bowing to me sorrowfully, “you need come no more, *Hubert is dead!*”

I hastened out of this garden, where I had experienced so many sweet emotions; and to this day, although many years have since passed, I like to return there at times in memory of my poor friend.

Such was the end of Hubert, whom I had carried away from his mother, from the pure mountain air, from liberty. Child of nature, he might still have been alive and healthy; civilization had killed him.

So, henceforth you may grow and multiply in peace, ye proud sultans of the mountains; I will never more

carry off your children. Death for death; the shot which strikes you like the lightning in open forest, under the starry canopy of heaven, is better than a slow agony amidst the narrow space of a few yards; and the iron ingot of the hunter is preferable a hundred times to the dull consumption of a prison.

But I must now return to my history.

CHAPTER XV.

HOW THE LION WOULD MAKE A FIRST-RATE COMMISSARY OF PROVISIONS.

EARLY in the spring of 1846 an expedition, in which my troop was included, was directed towards the frontier of Tunis. On the morning of the 18th, about an hour after our leaving the bivouac on the right bank of the Oued-meleh, in the country of the Enbeils, while the troops were marching in file in a narrow path, a lion crossed the path between the trumpeters and the head of the column, and seating himself on a small hillock within gunshot, seemed to be taking a leisurely survey of this goodly company defiling past him.

Colonel de Tourville, who commanded us, had kept the cavalry in the rear, waiting until the infantry and the convoy had passed through the defile; and it was not till after a considerable interval that a horseman came and informed me of the encounter which the convoy had met with. I immediately took up the spoor of the animal, accompanied by a spahi to hold my horse.

Half an hour afterwards I saw the lion preparing to leave the open country for the forest, driving an ox before him; and I learned from the soldier who accompanied me, that he was already following the animal before he crossed the ranks of our men.

This fact, insignificant as it may seem to many per-

sons, will not appear so to those who are accustomed to intelligent observation. For my part, I derive from it two lessons : first, that the lion is an exemplary father of a family, since he goes so far to fetch live prey for them ; secondly, that he really has the power to magnetize his victims even to the extent of driving them to the precise spot where he has decided to kill them.

When I came up with the lion, he had just crossed a bare but very steep ravine, and had reached, after climbing up the opposite acclivity, the skirts of a very thick wood. On seeing us approach he stopped short,—the ox, who was about ten paces in advance, doing the same. I then galloped up to the edge of the ravine, which was about sixty yards from the lion, in a straight line.

The position the animal occupied was greatly in his favour. Below him was a steep slope, difficult of access even on foot. To climb this slope so as to approach him within fifteen paces,—supposing he should be kind enough to wait for me so long,—would have been worse than madness ; for, a few remaining seconds of life, after my first shot, would have been quite sufficient for him to roll over me and to drag me along with him to the bottom of the precipice. At all events he was in too good a position to be likely to wait long ; and I felt convinced that on seeing me dismount and descend my side of the ravine, he would meet me halfway on his own side, keeping, according to his usual habit, the highest ground.

What I had foreseen actually took place.

The moment I dismounted, the lion, who had lain down, got up, and as soon as I had given my horse to my spahi to hold, and the latter began to move off out of the way, my opponent seeing me alone, on foot, and advancing down my side of the declivity, began to descend the other.

I beg to ask those who believe in the generosity and benevolent disposition of the lion, if it was hunger which thus impelled towards me this unscrupulous robber, whose good pleasure a live ox had been awaiting for I know not how many hours ?

My gun was ready cocked under my arm, and I con-

tinued to descend with the greatest precaution, the lion doing exactly the same, without appearing to take the least notice of me. In a few moments we had advanced to within twenty-five or thirty paces of each other.

I stood still. The lion kept moving sometimes to the right, sometimes to the left, but without coming any lower down. He seemed as if he were parading before me.

Each time he came directly in front of me he glared with knitted brow, laying back his ears, and bringing his long floating mane right over his eyes. Then he would growl an angry menace, showing all his teeth; from time to time he threw far behind him lumps of earth and heavy stones which he ploughed out of the ground with his front claws; presently he resumed his march.

As his anger increased every minute, and as my first shot, if it did not kill him, would certainly rouse him to a complete fury, I prepared to fire without descending one step lower. After having found, not without great difficulty, a place where I could sit without running the risk of rolling to the bottom of the ravine, I waited until the lion's perambulations should bring him right opposite to me, and I immediately brought my rifle to my shoulder.

At this movement he would fain have crouched still lower, but the declivity on which he stood not allowing this, he remained on his legs, but so that his belly actually touched the ground.

I took my aim behind the shoulder, straight for the heart, and fired. The lion bit the dust, clutched a moment at the earth, roaring furiously; then, with one immense bound, fell headlong about ten paces below me.

As he sank to the ground, and rolled downwards towards the bottom of the ravine, I could perceive the blood spouting out at both sides; and just as he attempted to take advantage of the root of a tree to stay himself in his fall, I fired my second shot right in his breast. His mighty claws then released their hold, and he rolled heavily to the bottom of the ravine.

I was about to reload my gun, but found I had not my

cartridge-box. I remembered that on dismounting I had left it hanging at the pommel of my saddle.

"Misfortunes never come singly," says the proverb.

I leave the reader to judge of my unspeakable vexation, when on reaching the spot where I had left my spahi, I found neither man nor horses. In vain I shouted, in vain I searched for a whole hour; not a living soul could I discover.

At last, having ascended a small hillock, I descried an Arab, mounted on his own horse, giving chase to mine, who, however, did not seem particularly disposed to allow himself to be caught. I hastened in their direction, but it was not until sunset that I succeeded in regaining my property.

The important thing for me was to have recovered my cartridge-box, which I much feared was lost in the course of this wild race.

Mounting my horse, I cleared at a round gallop the distance which separated me from the ravine, and speedily arrived on the scene of action. There I found plenty of blood, but no lion. As long as I could see the end of my barrels I stuck to the spoor of the animal, but when night had fairly closed in, I made for a douar situated close by.

In the morning I took up the chase again, and had little difficulty in following the steps of the animal for some distance, on account of the marks of blood. After this, however, I lost all clue to his course. The lion had met with a stream in his way in which he had bathed, and beyond this not a trace was to be seen.

The ground was dry and stony, and the country thickly wooded; so I was obliged to abandon my search, and to join the marching column at Souh-ras.

The Arabs, however, who came to the camp some days after, informed me that this lion had been found dead, and partly devoured by the vultures.

On the 1st of June, in the same year, we were encamped under the walls of Tebessa. On the 2nd, a convoy of sick, which was proceeding to Guelma, was cut to pieces

by the Arabs, along with its escort. On the 3rd, our troops, under the orders of General Randon, who charged at the head of the cavalry, inflicted exemplary vengeance upon the perpetrators of this foul deed. On the 19th, at midday, whilst at bivouac on the lands of the Hanenchah, a certain chérif, at the head of a multitude of fanatics, marched towards our camp; his intention being nothing less than to surprise us asleep in the intense heat of the day, and to murder us like so many sheep.

But before the Arabs had arrived within gunshot of our outposts the alarm was given, and a smart sally dispersed all these people; not, of course, without making them pay dearly for this piece of audacity.

Full of confidence in the words of the chérif, who had assured and promised them that our powder would *turn into water*, the Arabs waited for us within pistolshot, and just at the moment the general was giving the signal to charge, a large cluster was standing at about a hundred paces on our right, at the foot of a wooded slope.

The troop to which I belonged was ordered against this group, who, after firing at us, disappeared under the wood. Our horsemen having then dismounted, we began pursuing the fugitives, and a most extraordinary *battue* very soon commenced.

The chase, sometimes on foot, sometimes on horseback, lasted until night, and turned out to be so successful that the chérif had to abscond and leave the country, to escape being murdered by those whom he had persuaded to follow him.

Forty days after, the troops returned to their respective garrisons, and the 3rd Spahis to Guelma.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE MISFORTUNES OF LAKDAR.—A LION WHO DEVOURS WITHOUT INDIGESTION A WHOLE ACADEMY OF DOCTORS.—MY TENTH VICTIM.

I HAD scarcely arrived at camp, when I received a fresh complaint, occasioned by the presence of a large yellow lion, who, since my departure, had billeted himself upon my friends of the Mahouna.

I had still some remains of fever, but I knew how salutary the air and the waters of those mountains were for my complaint, and in the beginning of August I accordingly started.

Of all the natives of that district, a man called Lakdar was by far the greatest sufferer; having lost for his own share the enormous amount of twenty-nine oxen, forty-five sheep, and several mules.

I must say, however, that this poor fellow had selected for his habitation the least habitable spot in the whole country, which seems indeed to have been created for the use of the lions much more than for man.

Just fancy, on the declivity of a mountain densely covered with wood and cut up in every direction by ravines, the very wildest spot in short that could be found, a hidden corner of ground where a ray of the sun never penetrates; and you will have some idea of the retreat in which Lakdar had sheltered his household gods.

It is but fair to add, however, that he had in front of his tent a garden planted with fruit-trees, a field which he had ploughed himself, and a fountain of exquisite water; natural and most precious resources, which all the gold in the world could not have procured him elsewhere, and which no doubt reconciled him to the severe losses inflicted upon him by the lions.

On my arrival I found my host's park surrounded with a hedge six feet high and three feet wide, which the

lion was in the habit of clearing every night in order to come and take his supper.

I spent several consecutive nights in the very centre of the park without getting sight of the hungry visitor, while by day I searched carefully all the neighbouring localities, with as little success.

"You see," said Lakdar, "your presence was enough to make him disappear; but the moment you are gone he will return, and then my last beasts, my child, my brother, my wife, and myself, we shall all go down the same road; that is certain!"

"You must marry among us, and leave us no more," said Lakdar's wife; "we will show you the loveliest girls in the mountain for you to select from; the tribe will give you a beautiful tent, a fine flock, and thus we shall enjoy peace and happiness."

Such instances of the persevering attachment of the lion to the same douar or the same tent are by no means rare. All the Arabs of Constantine remember a similar case, which twenty years before excited the whole country, and indeed the whole province.

On the old road from Constantine to Batna, halfway between the two points, there exists a mosque called Jema-el-bechira. The learned men who inhabited it, fifty in number, had brought up a young lion that had been caught by the Arabs; which however disappeared suddenly at the end of a year. Soon after, the douars established in the vicinity of the mosque were attacked by the same lion.

One evening, the chief of the brotherhood of Jema-el-bechira was not to be found amongst the faithful at the hour of prayer. Next day, one of his companions disappeared in his turn; and so during forty consecutive days, the number of members belonging to this learned assembly was regularly diminished by one! The lion had, in fact, chosen his ambuscade near the fountain of the mosque, and had seized them one by one every evening at the moment when they went to perform their ablutions.

It was only after the fortieth had been devoured, (a whole academy devoured by one lion!) that the ten

survivors emigrated, and the mosque remained deserted.

Our gourmand, allured and excited by all this human flesh diet, took next to highway robbery, and began to attack travellers on foot or on horseback with so much spirit, that for several years no Arab of that district dared to travel that way even by day; at last he disappeared, finding, no doubt, the solitude he had created round him rather wearisome; and since that time, the El-bechira road had been frequented by all in perfect security.

During the time I had spent since my arrival in the Mahouna, I could see every day troops of wild boars rooting up the glades, which was a sure sign of the lion's absence. Far, however, from attributing this to the cause to which Lakdar and his wife assigned it, I looked upon it as a mere caprice on his part, and I therefore waited patiently, in the full expectation that I should see him return.

On the evening of the 26th of August, while I was seated in the garden, observing an old wild boar wallowing in the mire, not far off, Lakdar came and informed me that his black bull had not come home with the herd, and that he must have become the lion's prey; he resolved, in consequence, to go as soon as the day began to dawn and look for his remains.

The next morning, when I awoke, I found my host squatted near me; his face radiant with joy.

"Come along," said he, "I have found him!"

A quarter of an hour after, I arrived, through all but impassable wood, in presence of the bull's remains: the breast and hind quarters were devoured, all the rest was untouched.

As soon as Lakdar had brought me a cake and a jug of water, I dismissed him; and then set myself down at the foot of an olive-tree, at three paces from the bull's carcass.

The wood, in the middle of which I then was, was so dense, that I could not possibly see more than five or six yards round me.

I took good care to ascertain, by the spoor, the direc-

tion the lion had taken on retiring, so as to turn my face that way. I next took off my turban, the better to perceive the slightest sound.

At sunset, every living creature in my vicinity was on foot, and I was constantly on the alert, sometimes for a lynx, sometimes for a jackal, and sometimes for less still. Each sound created a fresh emotion; and I can affirm that during more than half an hour I experienced sensations enough to satisfy the most greedy lover of adventures.

Towards eight o'clock, just at the moment when the new moon was beginning to light dimly the spot on which I stood, I heard a branch crack in the distance. This time there could be no mistake—the lion's weight could alone produce that noise.

Shortly afterwards, a sort of muffled, suppressed roar resounded through the wood; and at last I could clearly distinguish his step—slow and heavy, as usual, when he has just left his lair. I waited, with my gun shouldered, my elbow on my knee, and my finger on the trigger, for the moment when his head should appear.

I did not see him till he came close up to the bull, which he began to lick with his huge tongue, without removing his eyes from me one instant.

Aiming as well as I could at the forehead, I fired.

The lion fell roaring, and rising almost instantaneously reared up on his hind legs like a horse plunging. I jumped up also, and making a step forward, so as to come close to him, I fired my second shot, which he no sooner received, than he rolled right over, as if struck by a thunderbolt.

I drew back a few paces to reload my gun, when, observing that the animal still moved, I advanced cautiously with my poniard in my hand; and after looking carefully for the heart, I raised my hand, and levelled my blow.

At the same moment the lion's fore-arm moved backwards, and the blade of my dagger snapped against a rib; as he slowly raised his enormous head, I stepped two paces backwards and shot him dead. My first ball, which had entered one inch below the left eye and gone

out behind the head, had not been sufficient to kill him.

While I was examining my shots, making new reflections on the extreme difficulty of killing a lion *dead on the spot*, I heard a great noise behind me. It was Lakdar, rushing along like a wild boar from its den.

"It is I! it is I!" he shouted, panting and out of breath, striving to force his way through the thicket. "I was there, close by, I heard all. So, he is dead, the infidel! he is dead, the ogre! he is dead, the scourge, the devil incarnate!"

Then he stopped to chuckle and exclaim, "This *is* a happy day indeed!"

The next moment he was calling upon his brother, his son, his wife, as if they could have heard him, screaming at the top of his voice, "Come to me! come to me! Bring the dogs! he is dead! he is dead!"

At last, he arrived at the side of the victim, exclaiming, "Thanks, brother! thanks! for what you have done this day. Henceforth, I belong to you, body and soul; take all you please; every thing here belongs to you."

"Look well," said I, "and see if it be really your friend."

He squatted silently close to the lion, and examined him attentively; then, as he endeavoured in vain to raise his monstrous head, he said to him:

"All you have taken from me, all the evil you have done me is nothing, since you have found your master; since you are dead, you villain, thief, assassin! and I can strike you with my fist."

And this he certainly did to his heart's content.

Soon after, Lakdar's brother and his son came and joined us, attracted by his repeated shots, and it was not without some difficulty that I persuaded them to return with me to the tent to wait for daylight. The next morning every man, woman, child, and dog in the mountain were on their way to Lakdar's habitation.

In spite of this accession of force, the thickness of the wood and the weight of the lion were such that we found it impossible to drag him from the place in which he had fallen, and we were forced to skin him on the spot.

Lakdar requested as a particular favour that he should be allowed to accompany me to Guelma, that he might make his entry with me, carrying himself these trophies of victory. To this I readily assented: and, the better to enjoy the full satisfaction of triumph, he spread the skin of the animal over the back of the mule on which he rode, taking good care, moreover, that the head should be in front and under his very eyes.

To give an idea of the immense size of this lion, I may cite the following fact: General Bedeau, who was passing through Guelma, having expressed a desire to see his skin, I hastened to pick out among the French one of the most powerful men in the troop, to carry the skin of the animal with its head, which I never allowed to be separated from it. The skin was scarcely placed on the shoulder of the spahi when he bent under the weight, and it became necessary to have it transported in a stable barrow, which, however, was scarcely sufficient to contain it.

Lakdar returned in the evening to take another look at it, and he was again present in the morning when it was taken to the dresser of skins.

This lion, compared to the finest of those which are exhibited in our *ménageries*, or at the Jardin des Plantes, was *what a horse is to a donkey*.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE LIONESS OF THE RAVINE OF EL-ARCHIOUA.

SINCE the death of the lion of the El-archioua (in July, 1844), his *widow*, having emigrated to the environs of Guelma, had enjoyed peace.

Towards the end of the present year, however, this lioness returned, followed by a new *husband* and two cubs.

Every day witnessed a fresh hecatomb of oxen or horses for the alimentation of the big parents, and the instruction of their little children.

After repeated complaints brought to me by the inhabitants of the district, I started for El-archioua. The lioness and her suite had, however, disappeared the previous day.

For several days I beat about the whole neighbourhood without finding the slightest trace, and at last I returned to cheik Seliman-ben-saïd, whose douar was situated in the centre of that district. Here I heard, on arriving, that a horseman of the Ouled-neïl had been sent to inform me that the lioness had just killed a horse in that vicinity; upon which I immediately set off to join this messenger, who pointed out to me, at a respectful distance, the spot where the deed had been committed.

I found there a large pool of blood, and the marks of the horse, which the lioness had dragged through the underwood, after having felled him. Here I dismounted, and leaving my beast with the Arab, with orders to take it back, I followed the track to the bottom of the ravine, where I found the victim still untouched. I placed myself at about four or five paces from the carcass, and waited.

The two following nights were without any result; but the following day, towards six o'clock in the evening, the approach of the lioness was announced to me by the general and precipitous flight of all the smaller animals, who had been till then roaming about me.

The ravine being deeply embanked and covered with bushes, I could not get sight of the lioness until she had come close up to her prey. The cubs followed her a few paces behind; and one of them having ventured to pass before his mother to get to the horse, she sprang upon him, threw him down with one blow of her paw, and obliged him to disappear in the brushwood.

The lioness had now perceived me. Retreating with her cubs, she began turning round the lentisc-tree, near which I sat, showing her head at times behind a bush, in order to try and see me, but withdrawing the instant I made a movement to take aim. The next moment she disappeared.

Hearing not the slightest sound, I was beginning to

believe she had fairly gone off, when, glancing to my left, I saw her at a few paces from me, stretched out like a snake, her head resting on her two paws, and her eyes fixed on mine.

Not a moment was now to be lost. I took aim full in the forehead, and pressed the trigger. She made a bound four or five feet high, and fell dead over the horse.

I waited until four o'clock in the morning, but the cubs did not reappear. Next day when I returned, accompanied by a crowd of Arabs, we found it impossible to loosen the teeth and claws of the lioness from the body of the horse. We were obliged, therefore, to cut the carcass of the latter, and to carry away the lioness together with the piece of flesh on which her death-grasp had fastened.

I confess that this fact, added to many others already mentioned, furnished me with much matter for reflection.

After accompanying the lioness to Guelma, I returned to the mountain in search of her young ones. The lion, however, had no doubt decamped with his family; for I was obliged to return at the end of a few days, without seeing any thing of them.

CHAPTER XVIII.

I RECEIVE A HUNTING-KNIFE AND A DEDICATION.—THE
LION OF MEJEZ-AMAR AND MY COMRADE ROSTAIN.

ON my return to the camp, I was summoned by General Bedeau, who did me the honour to present me with a splendid hunting-knife, which had been sent to me by M. Léon Bertrand, and by Devisme, the gunmaker. This weapon, fashioned with the most exquisite taste, and manufactured in the celebrated establishment of the latter, was accompanied by the following most courteous letter:

“Paris, 15th December, 1846.

“MY DEAR GERARD,

“You will have been informed by the last number of the ‘*Journal des Chasseurs*,’ of the present which Devisme and I proposed to make to you; and subsequently the daily press, whose observation nothing escapes, has given you fresh notice of our design, even before the gift itself was on its way.

“Fortunately, this time, the question is not about ‘official recompense’ (I had not then received the Cross of the Legion of Honour, which was conferred upon me eight months later), but a simple remembrance, which we are both delighted to offer you. Our hunting-knife, which will very soon be yours, will only be despatched this day, the 15th of December.

“It will be despatched to you to the care of Lieutenant-General Bedeau, my relation, to whom I address it, in order that it may be transmitted to you safely. As the communications between Constantine and Bone are not always easy, the next number of our journal will give you an exact representation of the weapon, in case the latter should not have reached you before.

“I have no doubt, my dear Gerard, that you will, when occasion offers, make good use of this weapon. It is as stoutly-tempered as you are, which is as much as to say, that, in case of need, you may depend upon it.

“Continue to promote in your own way, which by no means is a bad one, the progress of civilization in Algeria. Bear always worthily the name of ‘Lion-killer,’ by which the ‘*Journal des Chasseurs*,’ your sponsor, was the first to name you in France.

“But at the same time, forget not that prudence must ever be the companion of true courage; especially in presence of adversaries such as those with which it is your mission to fight.

“With these few words, I cordially shake your hand; and may Saint Hubert, our common patron, preserve you in his good keeping!

“LÉON BERTRAND,

Director of the ‘*Journal des Chasseurs*.’ ”

I received this flattering testimonial with no less gratitude than the kind and benevolent reception of my general.

It seemed, indeed, that every kind of good fortune was awaiting me at the same time; and that my reputation as "**Lion-killer**" was beginning to win me sympathy in more than one quarter; for it was about the same period that M. Adolphe d'Houdetot, brother of the general, and a well known huntsman, as well as a distinguished writer, was pleased to dedicate to me his "*Chasseur Rustique*."

All this was a great deal too much honour for a humble sergeant; and I only wish I could have worked miracles to make myself less unworthy of it. Unable, however, to accomplish such prodigies, I resumed my operations against the bearded monarch of the Atlas.

Towards the end of December, 1846, a company of the foreign legion was sent to the camp of Mejez-ainar, three leagues distant from Guelma; and a few days after, I was informed that a lion was in the habit of coming almost every night, roaming about the walls of the enclosure, and making known his presence by loud roars.

I set off immediately, taking along with me a French spahi, called Rostain, who had long wished to accompany me to see a lion; and, as he said, to *pull him by the beard*.

For several days the lion was neither seen nor heard; but on the 2nd of January, 1847, towards ten o'clock in the evening, whilst Captain de la Bédoyere, the cheik Mustapha, and I, were quietly conversing round the fire, the walls of the place were actually shaken by the roars of the dread monarch. Supposing him to be at our door, I seized my gun and went out instantly, recommending the captain to prevent Rostain from following me. I was scarcely out, when I heard the lion roar again; but on the other side of the river, which runs at the foot of the camp.

As I was coming out of the water, which I had just crossed, I was joined by Rostain; and though I generally have not the greatest confidence in those men who seem to think every thing easy, and who always pretend to be able to do better than their neighbours, and thus had not

paid any serious attention to Rostain's words, yet, I confess, that seeing him now boldly cross on foot this river, strong enough to carry away a horseman, I began to conceive a better opinion of him.

When he had come up to me, I gave him the assurance that very soon we should be in the lion's presence, and that he would have a fair chance of approaching him *near enough to take a pull at his beard*. In fact, after a quarter of an hour's walk on the road to Constantine, I perceived the lion standing at a hundred yards from us in the middle of our path.

The moon was beautifully clear; and I stopped to point out the animal to Rostain.

"*That a lion?*" said he; "impossible! why it is but a stray bull."

The lion happening, however, to roar at this moment, I had little difficulty in undeceiving my companion, who forthwith renounced his previous *designs*, and entreated me to leave the lion alone, since he was kind enough not to come to us.

I am acquainted with many fellows, less brave than this spahi (well known in the regiment as a good soldier), who, in his place, would have pretended not to be frightened; and, trusting to my assistance, would have attempted to deceive me, out of vanity and regard for the opinion of others,—the master-motive with men of weak minds. If I had had to do with one of these braggadocios, I would have contented myself with saying to him:

"Well! go on! The lion will wait for you; I will look on, not to rob you of the merit of your victory."

But my companion was a brave fellow, who had committed the mistake of judging lions in their wild state of nature by the tame ones he had probably seen; and being pleased with his frankness, I resolved to preserve him from all accident, even at the hazard of my own life.

"Come with me," said I, "and you shall behold him nearer."

On seeing us approach, the lion stretched himself across the road. Leaving Rostain at about thirty or

forty paces from the animal, I continued advancing towards him.

I will ask those who pretend that the lion flies before the presence of man, or never hurts him when he meets him, what must have been the intentions of this one, who, on seeing two men coming towards him with their rifles gleaming in the bright moon, lay down on their path, and remained without movement, as if determined to bar their passage.

When I had come within twenty paces I stooped to aim at his flank; but the moment I laid my gun to my shoulder, the lion wheeled about, crouching flat down to the ground like a cat, and presenting to me only the top of his forehead.

The attitude of my adversary leaving me no doubt of his intentions, I deemed it prudent not to risk my first shot, which could only graze the skull without penetrating it. I attempted, therefore to get on his flank, preserving always the same distance, and when I stood opposite his shoulder, I took aim again; but he wheeled about as before, considering, as it seemed to me, whether he should spring or not.

Comprehending perfectly the danger of this manœuvring, if it only lasted a few seconds more, I made one or two rapid strides sideways, with my gun ready shouldered, and before he could turn I fired at his side. The lion sprang in the air, and fell heavily on his flank with convulsive movements.

My second shot rapidly followed the first, and penetrated the animal a little behind the shoulder.

Rostain, seeing the animal fall, came running on; but at the moment when, in spite of my warnings, he was approaching close to him, the lion suddenly bounded up again with a roar which made me shudder.

My own barrels were empty; I therefore seized Rostain's rifle, and advancing a few steps closer, I gave him a third bullet, still behind the shoulder, hoping to reach the heart this time. The lion dropped at the shot, but rose again almost immediately.

I had only my dagger left,—a feeble resource against

an adversary whom three balls carefully aimed had not succeeded in despatching.

I have seen death often enough and near enough not to fear making this confession; and I must say at this moment I had the firm conviction that all was over both with Rostain and myself. In truth, during the many nights which I have spent in watching, I never once felt the emotion which I experienced that night.

Generally the more imminent the danger became, and the more death seemed to me inevitable, the stronger I found myself, the more master of my thoughts and actions, and, in short, ready to die without a complaint. It was because *alone* I had only to fear for myself, and to think of myself; whilst here, with a companion by my side, I was embarrassed, and my attention distracted by the presence of another.

Having observed an enormous jujube-tree a few paces behind us, I pulled my companion in that direction.

Most fortunately for us the lion, impeded by three severe wounds, could neither spring nor run; all he could do was to drag himself painfully forward.

The jujube-tree, in question, had a circumference of about ten yards, and its branches, bristling with thorns, were thick enough to prevent the lion in his present enfeebled state from attempting to break through. It was, therefore, sufficient to keep moving round this obstacle, without allowing ourselves to be caught, and to reload as we moved.

The lion, after following round upon our heels once, stumbling like a drunken man, laid himself down, expressing in a decidedly unpleasant manner his private dispositions towards us. As soon as he had done this, we took advantage of the opportunity to get out of his sight, and while Rostain was standing sentry near me, I proceeded to reload my gun with the least possible noise.

As I intended afterwards to march close up to the animal and shoot him in the head, I loaded with particular care to prevent the chance of a miss.

After fixing the last cap, not without experiencing a certain interior satisfaction, I rose, and proceeding a

few steps from the jujube-tree, approached the spot where the lion had lain down. The place was empty, and nothing was to be seen in its immediate neighbourhood.

Was the animal, no longer seeing or hearing us, looking for us elsewhere? I took no steps to ascertain this fact, for fear of a surprise.

Since he had found strength enough, in spite of his wounds, to rise and proceed so far that we could no longer see him, it was clear that he had it still in his power to make us pay dear enough if we should encounter him unexpectedly. I therefore resolved to wait for daylight before attempting to pursue him.

After a short rest, and after ascertaining that the lion had left a good deal of blood on the spot where he had lain down, we returned to the camp, taking care to keep clear of every thing like wood or thicket.

The next day at dawn I was on the lion's trace, followed by Rostain, the cheik Mustapha, and a few Arabs.

The quantity of blood the lion had lost in his retreat would have been truly incredible, had it been any other animal than a lion. During more than half an hour I was able to follow the red marks, without losing sight of them for an instant. At every spot at all wooded, the animal had dyed with blood the branches on both sides; a sure sign that the balls had gone completely through his body. It was even easy for me to ascertain, by the level at which these bloody marks were found, that he had been wounded, as I had supposed, behind the shoulder.

On reaching the skirts of a very dense thicket of olive-trees which the fugitive had entered, I thought that he must be there, dead or alive, and I gave my instructions accordingly. Rostain and the Arabs were to stand outside the wood to the eastward, and wait until I was positively certain of the lion's presence therein; then, upon a given signal,—always keeping clear of the wood,—they were to throw large stones into all the bushes.

If the lion was neither seen nor heard, he was very likely dead; and, in that case, resuming his spoor at the spot where he had entered, we should arrive in safety near his carcass. On the contrary, should he be still

alive, the probabilities were that he would sooner come down to meet a single man, than march up towards a group.

When I had convinced myself that the lion still remained in this thicket, I made the signal to Rostain with the skirt of my burnous, and he began immediately, assisted by the Arabs, to throw large stones into the bushes. Not, however, seeing or hearing any thing, I made a sign to my men to stop and keep quiet.

After a moment's silence I saw the lion come out slowly upon a small glade, and look about him in all directions.

At the moment when I was informing Rostain of this fact, Mustapha's dogs having met the lion nose to nose, he charged them.

The dogs took refuge near the Arabs, who, seeing them rush out of the wood with bristling hair and tails between their legs, decamped along with them; and then the lion issued out at ten paces from Rostain, who, losing also his presence of mind, followed the example of the Arabs; only instead of running upwards like the latter, the fatal inspiration seized him of descending the declivity of the mountain through the wood.

The lion, as soon as he perceived the spahi, followed him, and charged him furiously, roaring with the whole force of his lungs, with his mane bristling high, and his tail erect in the wind.

At every bound the lion stumbled; but he rose up immediately, and resumed his career with renewed fury. At the first glance I saw that the case of the unfortunate Rostain was critical; and I strained every nerve to afford him timely aid.

Seizing the moment when the man and the lion were crossing an open glade at forty paces from me, I sent a fourth bullet into the animal's side, which made him stagger once more. If Rostain had taken advantage of this short reprieve to continue his flight, he might have got clear;—but unfortunately he turned round to ascertain the effect of my shot, and so lost time. On seeing the lion rise again, and charge him afresh, he endeavoured to fly; but at the same instant he made a false step, then

fell; and as he was rising, the lion seized him with his jaws, and rolling over with him, disappeared in the thicket.

Notwithstanding the thickness of the wood, I was beside Rostain in less than a minute. I found him lying in a pool of blood; the lion's blood and his own mingled together. Supposing that he had killed him, the lion had disappeared.

The poor fellow was not dead; and on examining the upper part of the body, I found it uninjured. The four incisive teeth, however, had pierced through his thigh like so many musketshots, and sixteen claw wounds, some of them terribly deep, had literally ploughed up the flesh of the unfortunate man.

It was in vain I called the Arabs to assist me in pulling him out of the wood; not one of them ventured to come near me. I therefore took him on my shoulders, and managed to carry him myself to the edge of the plain.

The remainder of that day was occupied by me in taking care of the invalid, until the arrival of Doctor Gresloy, who came from Guelma, whither I had sent for him, with all possible speed.

The next morning I returned to the wood, with a great number of Arabs, who agreed to search it with me. I did not suppose that the lion could be still alive, but if dead, it was necessary to have a great many searchers in order to find him.

After taking up his spoor at the spot where he had reached the spahi on the previous day, we tracked him, always by the blood, about three hundred yards. There he had entered a large bush, forming a sort of peninsula, and separated by the river Bou-hemdem from the great thicket called by the Arabs El-bhar.

When I had ascertained that the lion had not come out of the first bush, I left the greater part of the Arabs at this point, instructing them, as on the previous day, to make as much noise as possible, so as to oblige him, if still alive, to make himself seen or heard.

Convinced that, if he was not dead, he would make for the thicket of El-bhar, which he habitually frequented

and where he might do us much mischief, I posted on one of the passages which led to it five Arabs well armed, and I myself guarded the other,—the one by which I deemed his egress most probable.

Very soon there arose from our men an uproar capable of raising the very dead. The lion stirred not.

The Arabs now began to yell out in chorus, "He is dead, the villain! he is dead, the Jew! he is dead, the pagan!"

All of a sudden, one of these bawlers caught sight of the lion, lying down under a lentisc-tree. He had the courage to fire upon him. Immediately the lion sprang on the man, but his bound lacked power, and the Arab got off with a few scratches of no great importance. A moment after, another fellow, who had no idea that the lion was so near him, met him nose to nose. At first he did not lose his presence of mind, and took a steady aim, while the lion on his side crouched flat down, and waited.

So far the game was pretty well played; but, unfortunately, the man hesitated, became frightened, and, at the moment when he turned his head to see if there was any one behind him to support him, the lion, less undecided, darted upon him like lightning. With one blow of his claw he split open his cheek from top to bottom, smashed to pieces the stock of his gun, and cleft in two the hand which held it. The man was hurled to the ground by the mere shock; the lion then picked him up by the loins, shook him twice or thrice in his mouth, and sent him spinning head foremost into a bush about ten paces off.

Another Arab, who carried a gun with a fixed bayonet, found himself on his road as he was marching upon us, and also saluted him with a shot. The lion, without pulling up this time, twisted the bayonet into a hook, and flung the Arab out of his road, just as a man might hurl a small stone which he found in his path; and then, having cleared all these obstacles, he reached at last the bank of the stream, opposite to the ford where my five men were on guard.

As long as the lion stood motionless on the bank, the Arabs remained steady at their post, elbow to elbow,

guns shouldered, and apparently resolved to conquer or die; but as soon as the lion, dashing through the water with his bristling mane and thundering voice, marched straight up to them, they took to their heels with admirable unanimity.

The lion seeing this, crossed quietly, landing at the very spot which they had been charged to defend, and disappeared among the wood. The ford which I was guarding alone was about three hundred yards higher up, and thus I had not been able to fire, or to reach the spot in time to do so.

When I arrived, running at full speed, the lion was already entering the thicket; he was covered with blood, and walked on three legs, with an unsteady, tottering gait.

I was about to dismiss all the Arabs, and follow the fugitive, when they came and informed me that the litter destined to carry Rostain to Guelma had come, and that, being in great suffering, he wished me to accompany him thither. With this request I hastened to comply, and escorted him up to the camp, as also the two Arabs I have already mentioned, and who were more or less injured by the animal.

Next morning I returned to Mejez-amar, and during ten consecutive days I searched the wood of El-bhar, to make sure that the lion had not left it; but all my trouble was in vain. At last the vultures began to hover above the thicket, then to lower by degrees their flight into narrower circles; a sufficiently plain indication to me of the point I wished to ascertain.

I knew the lion was dead, and my object was accomplished; so I left the Arabs to discover the remains of the animal, and I had the satisfaction a few days after to see them bring to me the head, which, although much disfigured, was preserved by Doctor Gresloy.

The two natives who had been wounded by the lion recovered very soon, their wounds not being very serious, owing to the weak state of the animal at the time he attacked them, and to the thickness of their burnous.

Not so with poor Rostain, who had to remain eight months in hospital, and to pass a season at the waters of

Aman-scontin, and who ultimately recovered with the loss of one of his legs.

CHAPTER XIX.

MY SOJOURN IN PARIS, IN 1848.—PROJECT OF A SCHEME FOR AN ORGANIZED SYSTEM OF LION-HUNTING.

MY health, already much shaken by the innumerable fatigues of this life of emotion and excitement, was tried still more severely by the unfortunate consequences of this last chase.

In the course of the winter of 1847, I received leave of absence for France, where I safely arrived; and after staying one month with my family, I arrived in Paris towards the end of December. I have already said, in relating Hubert's story, to whom I paid my first visit.

I was highly gratified by the distinguished and flattering reception which I met with on all hands; and I was especially happy to find friends more devoted than the factitious life of the capital, as I judged it, gave me any reason to expect.

Deeply impressed as I had daily been in the course of my hunter's life, with the enormous losses which the lions inflict upon the tribes, and by the truly sincere gratitude which repaid each new success, I had long pondered in my mind some means of protection more efficacious than my own individual arm; and which might be profitable at the same time both to Algeria and France.

It seemed to me that something analogous to the service organized in our departments for the destruction of wolves, might be applicable in Africa; and it was upon this useful institution of the wolf-hunt, that I prepared in my turn a project of organization suitable to the chase of the lion.

My idea was simple and of very easy execution.

To enlist volunteers, selected from our infantry regiments in Africa, to attach to them some natives also picked out of our ranks, to place these corps of *free-hunters* at the disposal of the commandants of provinces, subdivisions, and circles, in order to seek out and kill the lion;—such, in few words, was to be the basis of my project, and such the instruments that were to carry it into effect.

I had calculated that this organization would cost yearly twenty thousand francs (800*l.*) to the province of Constantine, which loses nearly two hundred thousand (8000*l.*) by the ravages of the lions alone. The tribes, amongst which these animals particularly levy their ruinous tribute, would have borne joyfully not only the expenses of the first establishment, but all those necessitated by the keeping up of the lion-hunt; and I hesitate not to say that no institution would ever have been accepted with so much gratitude and favour, both by the colonists and the native populations. Of course I expected the honour of commanding all these brave fellows, and of leading their first steps in a career so new to them.

After being received by the king, the Duchess of Orléans, and the princes, with a distinction to which the obscurity of my condition and the inferiority of my grade gave me certainly no title, I had a good opportunity of intrusting to proper hands the work which I had projected.

It was understood, approved, and was about to be put in execution, when the events of February took place, in consequence of which I was once more plunged into my original obscurity. I had, however, the remembrance of all the kind co-operation that had been offered to me, and at the same time a better chance of serving my country; I had also a set of weapons which I had the honour to receive a few days previously from the hands of the young Comte de Paris, to be employed in carrying out the mission which I had traced out for myself. Some presents derive a double value from the manner in which they are offered.

I should be ungrateful indeed,—a character which,

thanks be to God, does not belong to me,—if I did not relate here with what *apropos* and touching grace these weapons, consisting of a case of superb pistols, were offered to me by the young prince. The day of my presentation at the Tuileries, the Duchess of Orléans, his august mother, whom I desired to salute respectfully in her triple character as a woman, as a princess, and as a widow, was pleased to receive me in her private apartments. Her reception, full of benevolent kindness, and of which I preserve a most grateful remembrance, touched and moved me even to tears.

After saying a few words on Algeria, and on the perilous vocation which prompted me to seek those terrible combats, at the recital of which, as she graciously added, she had more than once trembled for the conqueror, the duchess conducted me to the two young princes her sons, the Comte de Paris and the Duke de Chartres, and begged me to relate minutely before them, without omitting the slightest detail, the various incidents of the death of a lion, the noble skin of which I had had the honour to present to her, and which I then recognized at once as my huge yellow-maned lion of the Mahouua.

I obeyed the princess's desire.

When I had finished my recital, which of course I am not going to begin over again, for very good reasons, and which, I am glad to say, seemed to make a lively impression on my young audience,—to judge by the various emotions depicted on their juvenile countenances, principally at that critical moment when the lion, already struck with two balls fired close to him, finished by breaking my dagger in the final struggle,—the Comte de Paris went out for an instant without saying a word. In less than five minutes he returned, holding a case in his hand, and coming up to me, said, "You often run very great dangers, Monsieur Gérard, and these terrible beasts (pushing with his foot the lion's skin) will play you a wicked trick some day. A bold hunter like you must be a bold soldier; you must preserve yourself for the army.

"You have a gun, you have a dagger; but you want

something more,—a good pair of pistols ; pray accept these which I now offer to you, and make good use of them as opportunity occurs.”

I forgot the child, and pressed with heartfelt emotion the hand of the prince held out to me.

Silent and attentive during all this scene, the Duchess of Orléans took her son, and, drawing him quickly upon her knees, covered him with kisses and with tears.

CHAPTER XX.

I RETURN TO AFRICA, THE BEARER OF A COMPLETE ARSENAL.

BEFORE leaving the capital, M. Adolphe d'Houdetot, not content with dedicating to me one of his most charming books, presented me with a superb carabine ordered by him of Devisme, and manufactured with the greatest possible care purposely for lion-hunting.

This remarkable weapon, with two parallel barrels, of the calibre of seventeen millimetres in diameter, and sixty-five centimetres long, is, at the same time, *à tige* and *à chambre*¹. The rifling of the barrels is progressive, according to the principles adopted for the carabine of the “Chasseurs de Vincennes ;” and the mode of forcing in the ball is the same.

The ball, weighing fifty-five grammes, is conical and armed with a steel point, forming all the upper half of the cone. This point gives a force of penetration much superior to that of the ordinary balls, and pierces the hardest bodies. The whole weight of the carabine is three kilogrammes and a half.

This splendid piece of fire-arms was accompanied by a

¹ The translator has thought it better to leave the technical words employed in the original.

very handsome dagger, also manufactured by Devisme, and presented by himself, of which the blade is of solid steel, one foot long, as broad as the hand, beautifully grooved, and with a double edge.

Moutier Lepage, ex-armourer to the princes, wished in his turn that some weapon from his manufactory should have the honour of contributing to the death of a lion; and he presented me with a carabine no less carefully executed than the first, and made on purpose for me. The parallel barrels of this weapon are fifty-five centimetres long, upon a calibre of eleven millimetres, such as has been since adopted for the "Cent Gardes" of H. M. the Emperor Napoleon. The nine rifling grooves are cut in a spiral manner, and go once round in a distance of seventy centimetres. The ball, which is cylindro-conical, weighs fifteen grammes. The total weight of the weapon is three kilogrammes.

My arsenal was improving, as may be seen, and as my fair dreams of a *lion-hunting* company had vanished, I had at least, as an individual, the means of equipping myself in magnificent style before entering on a fresh campaign.

When I tried my new weapons for the first time with MM. Devisme and Lepage, in their shooting galleries, and at Vincennes, I was astounded at their power of penetration.

The ball armed with the steel point pierced through and through a cast-iron plate one centimetre thick; the leaden ball went through a *madrier*, or thick oak plank, twenty-five centimetres in depth.

It was with these two carabines, the best that can possibly be made for hunting the lion, that I returned to Africa in the course of the summer of 1848.

CHAPTER XXI.

AN EXCURSION AT THE ZMOULS, THE OULED-SASSI, AND
THE OULED-ACHOUR.—THE LIONS OF THE ZÉRAZER.

TOWARDS the end of January, 1848, having received a mission in the southern part of the circle of Constantine, I had an opportunity of hearing every evening, under the tent, the recital of my own hunting exploits. The rumour of my achievements in the circles of Guelma and Bone had reached this country, and the more frank and candid among those men, openly confessed that they gave no credit to them.

"How can it be possible," said they, "that you, quite alone, in the darkness of night, can have succeeded in killing so many lions, and be still alive, when we have such trouble to finish one of them, after putting twenty-five balls into him, in the broad sunlight, and on horse-back, and never without losing a fair contingent of men and horses?"

It was in vain I told them that it was all simple enough; that, when the lion marched up to me, I waited for him; and that, when he did not, I marched up to him; they merely answered: "Then the lions of Guelma must be good fellows indeed; that's all."

They wanted a proof, and I, on my part, longed for the opportunity of giving them one, which should be definitive and conclusive.

As soon as my weapons, which I had left at Guelma, had arrived, I left Constantine for the Zmouls, on the 29th of January, 1849, having heard that there were lions in the mountain called the Zérazer.

As the weather continued very unfavourable until the 1st of February, I contented myself with sending the Arabs about to gather news in the surrounding douars, and waited for the return of clear weather, occupying myself meanwhile with my official duties in connexion with the Arabs.

On the 1st of February a detachment of the tribe of the Seguia came and placed themselves at my disposal; and as the ground was covered with a few inches of snow I ordered them to go and search the wood early next morning, and to light a fire whenever they found the spoor of the lion, on his return towards the mountain. The fire was to be the rallying-point for us all.

The remainder of the day I employed in taking a survey from the most lofty points of the Zérazer, in order to make myself properly acquainted with the country. This mountain, about nine miles in length, bends away perpendicularly to the eastward, but contains some wooded valleys to the west.

I judged that the lion must be in that quarter, and that should he not take the offensive at once, he would most probably follow the high ridges to gain the repairs of the Bou-azif.

On the 3rd, at eight o'clock in the morning, I mounted my horse, accompanied by Amar-ben-taïeb, cheik of the Ouled-sassi, and by Mohammed-ben-ghenem, cheik of the Ouled-achour, who were to take the command each of their own division.

CHAPTER XXII.

A DOUBLE SHOT, SUCH AS I WISH MY READERS MAY ENJOY.—THE ZÉRAZER ONCE MORE.

AFTER marching for an hour at the foot of the mountain, proceeding towards the south, we perceived a column of smoke on the top of a rock, which seemed planted there like a sentinel. As soon as we came in sight the burnous were waved in the air; it was the Arabs, who had just settled themselves down after having finished their search.

On approaching the rendezvous, I saw an Arab standing alone, apart from his companions, at the foot of a

ridge leading to the summit. He pointed with his arm, and on following with my eye the direction of his hand, I saw the lions' traces fresh and abundant.

Sin confessed is said to be half forgiven. So much the better for me; for at that moment I fear I committed an enormous sin of pride when I beheld on one side the traces of three lions, and on the other forty Arabs, armed to the teeth. To say the truth, then, I felt proud, on viewing myself from head to foot, to find that there was nothing in my hunting costume which gave me any resemblance to these people. The uniform of a spahi, such as the French alone wear it; the ordinary *caban*¹, to blunt in some degree the effect of the claws of the lion, in case of a close encounter; and the Devisme dagger over all;—such was my fighting gear.

The solitary Arab who had first discovered the spoor had followed me in silence, when, after dismounting, I had begun to pursue the traces of the lions, in order to study them carefully. On turning round I saw on his countenance a sort of bantering expression, which seemed to imply, "There are three of them, master."

"They are young," said I; "they are not above three years old; I should have much preferred a fine old full-maned lion."

He made a grimace, and went off to report this to the assembly, which I reached almost as soon as himself.

"Let two men lead our horses," said I to the cheiks, "and go and wait for us at the foot of the mountain; let two others keep close to me with my weapons, and let all follow me in silence."

Once arrived on the table-land which commanded the rendezvous, I found a lair quite fresh, on leaving which the lions had taken their course towards a valley which seemed to me to furnish them with a very convenient cover.

I then ordered the two divisions to follow without noise the ridge of the rocks, which formed a ledge extending over the whole length of the Zéraser, and thus to proceed up to the highest peak which commands the

¹ A cloak with a hood.

plain. Having reached the northern extremity, they were each to occupy the following positions:

The division of the Ouled-sassi (the most warlike of the two) was to enclose and cover the western declivity, the supposed resort of the lions; the Ouled-achour had charge of the other slope. Each division was to furnish two men to follow the ridges, and to regulate the march of all the rest, besides one or two sentinels to communicate with me; all to march towards the south, making as great a noise as possible, but without firing a shot, and in case of the lions assuming the offensive, the shouts were to cease, and the sentinels to wave their burnous by way of warning.

The platform on which the lions had rested seeming to me, from numerous traces covered with snow, to be their habitual path, I took my carabines from my two men, and after placing them myself in an angle of the rock, where they could see every thing without incurring any danger, I sat down upon a stone in the centre of the platform. I had not been there long, before the wind, which blew from the north, brought to my ears a long hurrah, upon which I immediately directed my whole attention towards the sentinels scattered at various points along the ridges which lay before me.

Nearly an hour had elapsed since I had heard the signal, when a gazelle appeared coming along the ridge which overlooked the north side. After stopping for an instant, she cast a frightened glance behind her, and then bounded down towards me at full speed, passing at a distance of some fifteen paces on my left. At the same moment I heard some large stones rolling down the opposite declivity, and immediately perceived a lion, separated from his companions, advancing straight upon me.

The path followed by the animal led close up to the bush near which I was seated, so I took care not to stir, in hopes of thus shooting him between the eyes at ten paces off. Presently he disappeared for a moment amidst the turnings and windings of the path, which at that part was rather thickly wooded.

With my carabine ready shouldered, and my finger on

the trigger, I awaited with impatience his reappearance, when a shout from the Arabs concealed behind me, gave me to understand that the lion had taken to the left. On rising, I saw him standing proud and erect on the very rock which sheltered my two men.

A ball planted behind the shoulder rolled him over on the spot; and, as he rose again, a second ball followed the first. At the second shot, he roared loud enough to annihilate the two Arabs with terror, and then sprang from the top of the rock towards a precipice full fifty feet deep.

No doubt he kindly intended to fall upon the Arabs, instead of which he fell headlong into a thicket filled with sharp thorns and stones, which received his last convulsions.

Scarcely had I reloaded my carabine, when the sentinels shouted out at the top of their voices: "Two lions are standing at bay before the Ouled-achour!"

There was no time to hesitate. I followed the Ouled-sassi, who had run on before me, and were leaping from rock to rock like chamois. The lions, however, appeared no more that day.

Next day, the 3rd, the weather did not allow of our returning to the mountain. On the 4th, at twelve o'clock, I was at my first day's post of observation, and towards three o'clock, a lioness came towards me by the same path the lion had followed on the previous occasion.

I was placed on the top of the rock, and as I remained seated until she came within shooting distance, she advanced without perceiving me. The moment I rose, she stopped short at a distance of some thirty paces, and after looking anxiously behind her, blowing all the while like a cat, she showed me her teeth,—a very fine set, upon my word! I took aim at the shoulder and fired. On receiving the shot, she doubled herself up in two like a serpent, turning her head towards the side which had been struck; then, gathering all her remaining strength, she made a bound of scarcely ten paces, and fell on the spot, after having received a mortal wound in the back of the neck by my second ball.

The Arabs, who had run up at this double shot, came

one by one to beg my pardon and kiss the hand which had thus given them, and that twice over, a lesson which, probably, they will never forget. The skin of the animal I sent to Constantine.

We only found on the following day the lion I had first shot; it turned out that while we were searching for him at a great distance, he had expired at the very foot of the rock, where he was shot, amongst the bushes.

It was necessary, however, to ascertain what had become of the third animal. As to the Arabs, they were now ready to march with me as long as there was a lion left in the whole country.

By following the same tactics over again, we found a lioness of the same age as the one killed on the previous day, and in the same valley.

Some Arabs, employed in cutting wood near the platform which I occupied, having shouted out on perceiving her, she charged them so savagely, that, if it had not been for the thickness of the wood in that place, one of them would certainly have been a dead man. After losing sight of the fugitives, she penetrated to the lowest part of a valley, so densely wooded, that it was impossible to get sight of her again.

The inhabitants of the Bou-azif assured us they had seen her on the evening of the same day, marching towards that mountain; and concluding that after so decided a move she would not for a while reappear in the Zéraser, I returned to Constantine.

Early in the following year, I was summoned to the same country and by the same people, who were tormented by the presence of two lions who had come over from the Aurès.

Early on the next morning, I ascended one of the high platforms of the Zéraser. Ten Arabs were searching the wood from north to south, and ten others in the opposite direction, and the appointed rendezvous was on the top of a ridge which commanded the whole country.

The rangers to the north had only seen old spoor covered over with snow; those of the south, more fortu-

nate, came right upon the lair, the inhabitants of which were somewhat astonished to be knocked up so very early. They skulked away, showing their displeasure in their own fashion, and got into one of their other dwellings not far off.

The cheik of the Seguia, who brought the report, told me that one of the lions seemed to protect the other, and that in all probability he would not refuse battle. I therefore proceeded to the new repair at about two o'clock in the afternoon, and found the lions had not left it.

Some Arabs who had remained on the lookout told me that one of the two had been seen marching several times out of the thicket, and showing considerable signs of irritation.

After placing in a position of safety an officer who accompanied me, I ordered all the natives to withdraw, keeping only beside me the bearer of my weapons.

This plan succeeded admirably. The Arabs were scarcely out of sight when the lion walked out of the thicket, looked about on all sides, and seeing only me and another man, marched straight upon us, his companion following him at some little distance behind.

I was seated upon an elevated ground commanding the position, the Arab who carried my weapons being beside me.

I now took my carabine and cocked it, placing the other as a reserve in the hands of the Arab.

The first lion, after partly ascending the declivity, stood still, staring me in the face. I was just about to press the trigger, when he turned round to look behind, a movement which presented the shoulder so beautifully, that I hesitated not one instant in firing.

On receiving this shot the lion fell, and after making an ineffectual effort to rise, lay stiff and motionless.

The younger lion had by this time got to the foot of the declivity, uttering a loud roar, and with a most threatening aspect. I immediately gave him a ball a little behind the shoulder. The lion fell under the shot, but presently jumped up again, and bounded close up

to me. Instantly seizing my other gun, I aimed at him in the temple, fired, and shot him dead on the spot.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE VALLEY OF OURTEN.—A LIVE BAIT OF A NEW SORT.

IN the month of August, 1850, I received notice of an old lion of large size, who was to be found in the Bou-azif, near Batna, in the country of the Zmouls.

My tent was no sooner set up at the foot of this mountain than my lion was reported to have gained the Fedj-zouj, where I was again informed that he might be found in the Aurès.

After travelling full a hundred leagues after my beast, without seeing any thing of him but his spoor, I pitched my tent in the valley of Ourten, not quite a league from Krenchéla; and, at last, I had the satisfaction of hearing him roar in the night of the 22nd of August.

This thickly-wooded valley being only crossed by one single path, it was easy enough for me to find the animal's spoor, and to follow it up to his very lair.

At six o'clock in the evening, I dismounted on a hillock, which commanded a view of the whole country, being accompanied by my spahi and a man of that country; the first carrying my reserve carabine,—the second, my old gun.

As I had expected, the lion roared in the wood at sunset; but instead of coming towards me, he moved off to the westward at such a pace that I found it impossible to reach him. I therefore returned at midnight, and took up my position at the foot of a tree planted on the path along which the lion had travelled. The country, in this place, was clear of wood and cultivated.

The moon being clear, and the sky fair and bright, it was easy from the spot I occupied to survey the country

on all sides. Feeling rather fatigued by my march of several hours, and having but little hopes of any adventure on this night, I enjoined my spahi to keep a good lookout and lay down. I was just dropping off to sleep, when I felt myself gently pulled by the burnous.

On raising my head, I perceived two lions sitting side by side, at about a hundred yards' distance upon the path I occupied; and judging at once that they had seen and followed us, I prepared to make the best of my situation.

The moon completely lighted up the whole distance which the lions had to traverse in order to reach the foot of the tree; but near it every thing was dark, within a circumference of three or four yards, on account of the shadow projected by the foliage. My spahi and I were placed in the part which was not lighted; whilst the Arab was snoring away in happy indifference at ten paces from us, in the full moonlight. There could be no doubt about it, it was upon this man that the lions' eyes were fixed.

I expressly forbade my spahi to awake the Arab, convinced that when he woke up he would be proud to have served as a bait, even without knowing it. I then prepared and placed my weapons against the tree, and rose up to observe the movements of the enemy, who I found took no less than half an hour to perform the distance of a hundred yards which separated them from us.

They kept concealing themselves by means of stones or brushwood, so that I could only see them when they raised their heads, which they did every now and then to make sure that the Arab was still in the same place. At last, the boldest of the two came crawling on his belly up to ten paces from me, and fifteen paces from the Arab. His glaring eyes were fixed upon the latter with such an expression; that I began to fear I had waited too long.

The second, who was crouching flat down at a few paces behind, came and placed himself in a line with the first, about four or five paces distant from him.

Then only I discovered, for the first time, that they were both adult lionesses.

I fired on the first with a steady aim, which made her fall tumbling and roaring at the very foot of the tree. The

Arab had scarcely awoke, when a second shot killed the animal dead on the spot. The first ball had entered the mouth and gone out at the shoulder; the other had passed through the heart.

Feeling now reassured on account of my men, I looked about for the second lioness, and found she was standing fifteen paces off, looking at what was taking place around her.

I took another gun and aimed. She sat coolly down. On receiving the shot, she fell roaring in a maize-field, which bordered the path. When I approached, I found by her groans that she was still alive; and not choosing to venture in the dark amidst the plantation which protected her, I withdrew. On the return of daylight, I went up to the spot, but only found her bloody spoor leading towards the wood.

After sending off the dead lioness to the neighbouring garrison, who enjoyed a banquet in her honour, I returned to my post of observation as on the previous day.

Very soon after sunset, the male roared for the first time; and, instead of leaving his resort, he remained in it all night, yelling like a very bedlamite. Convinced that the wounded lioness was there, I sent, on the morning of the 24th, two Arabs of the country for the purpose of exploring; they returned, however, without having ventured to go near the lair.

The night of the 24th—25th was, like the preceding one, filled with the roars and plaintive moans of the lion, both on the mountain and among the wood. On the 25th, at five o'clock in the evening, I ordered a young goat to be taken and secured, and proceeded with it to the mountain.

The lion's abode was of very difficult access, but by dint of crawling, sometimes on my hands, sometimes on all fours, I managed to get in. I soon found convincing proofs of the presence of the inhabitants, upon which I ordered the goat to be unmuzzled and tied to the foot of a tree.

A most amusing panic now took place among the Arabs, who carried my weapons. To find themselves right in

the midst of the lions' lair, and to hear this confounded goat actually calling them on with all her might, seemed to them a most intolerable situation!

They first consulted together in order to decide which was preferable,—to climb up a tree or on a rock; but, at last, they begged to be allowed to stay near the goat. Pleased with this mark of confidence, I made them remain close to me.

Scarcely a quarter of an hour had elapsed when the lioness appeared; I saw her all on a sudden close to the goat, staring about her with an astonished look. At my shot, she fell motionless.

The Arabs were already kissing my hands, and for my own part I really thought her dead, when she rose up again as if nothing was the matter, showing us all her teeth.

One of the Arabs who had run forward after the shot, seeing her rise again, and finding himself only six paces from her, suddenly caught hold of the first branches of the tree, at the foot of which the goat was tied, and disappeared like a squirrel among the branches.

The lioness met her death at the root of this tree, having received a second ball in the heart. The first had come out at the back of the head without breaking the skull bone.

This booty served, as the other had done, to increase the ordinary fare of our soldiers; and I spent the night in listening for the roars of the lion.

Some days after, this lion having deserted the country, in consequence of the disappearance of his two companions, which he had sought for in vain, I thought proper to do the same; firmly intending, however, to return every year to this fair valley of Ourten, where I had discovered such magnificent repairs.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE BLACK LION OF KRENCHÉLA.

AFTER the return of the column sent on an expedition into Kabylia, in the end of July, 1851, I requested from General de St. Arnaud, then commander-in-chief in the province, permission to survey the environs of the Krenchéla, with the view of discovering the lion I had left there.

Instead of a leave of absence, I received a mission for those parts; which, therefore, obliged me for more than a month to lend a deaf ear to the daily reports which I received from the Arabs on the misdeeds of the grim solitary.

In the early part of September, when my mission was over, having pitched my tent in the centre of the country invaded by the lion, I proceeded to beat about the douars which he most frequently visited.

I had spent thus many a night in the starlight without the least result. when, on the morning of the 13th, after a heavy rain which had lasted up to midnight, the natives who had been searching the wood, came and reported that the lion had taken to his lair, at about half a league from my tent.

I started at three o'clock, taking with me three Arabs; one to keep my horse, another to hold my weapons, and a third to carry a goat, who had certainly not the least idea of the important part she was about to play in this expedition.

Having dismounted on the skirts of the wood, I made straight for a glade, situated in the middle of the repair, where I found a small tree to attach the goat to, and some long grass to sit upon. The Arabs went and cowered down a hundred yards off in the wood.

I had scarcely been in this spot a quarter of an hour, the goat all the while screaming with all her might, when

a covey of red partridges got up behind me, uttering the little cry they are wont to produce when surprised. I looked all round and every where, but saw nothing.

The goat, however, had become silent, and her anxious eyes were fixed on mine. She made a desperate effort to break her bonds, and began trembling in all her limbs. At this evident sign of peculiar distress, I turned round again, and then saw at about fifteen paces behind me, the lion, stretched at the foot of a juniper-tree, through the branches of which he was examining us, making all the while the most horrible grimaces.

In my position I could not possibly fire without wheeling about; I tried to shoulder my gun on the left side, but found this awkward; I therefore turned myself round very gently without rising up. When I had taken a good position, and at the moment I was taking aim, the lion jumped up and showed me all his teeth, shaking his head with an air which clearly meant, "What the deuce are you about there?"

I hesitated not an instant, and fired in the mouth. The animal fell on the spot without moving a step. My men rushed up at my shot, and as they were impatient to touch the lion, I first sent him a second ball between the eyes, so as to render him perfectly safe.

The first ball having entered the mouth, had cut its way through the interior of the body, coming out near the hip.

I had never before obtained such a degree of penetration, though I had only loaded with sixty grains of powder. It was, however, the Devisme carabine, and the famous steel-pointed cylindro-conical balls.

This lion, which was black-maned and one of the oldest I have ever killed, set a boiling the pots of four companies of infantry and two troops of cavalry, which were at that time quartered at Krenchéla.

CHAPTER XXV.

VISIT TO PARIS.—RETURN TO CONSTANTINE.—ILLUSTRATION OF THE PROVERB, “WHEN THE CAT IS AWAY,” &c.

AFTER various adventures of a similar kind, in September, 1853, I took my departure for France on leave of absence.

My first care on arriving in Paris was to employ myself with renewed energy about my old idea of an organized “lion-hunt.” On this occasion Count Edgar Ney, master of the buckhounds, to whom I explained it, received the plan most favourably, and desired me to write a special memoir on the subject, which I had the honour of presenting myself to the emperor.

The minister, however, raised a difficulty which I had not foreseen, and which unfortunately stopped the realization of my wishes.

In order to provide lodging and maintenance for the hunters who might be severely wounded, and thus put *hors de service*, I endeavoured to secure for them either a home at the Invalides, or a pension. The case, however, not being provided for by any existing law, my application was rejected.

Finding myself unsuccessful in these projects, I determined to return to my former post.

On my arrival at Constantine after a year’s absence, I was beset on all sides with fresh complaints against the leonine race, which indeed had behaved very badly during my twelvemonth’s absence.

The following is a brief account of the crimes reported to me.

I shall pass over in silence the material losses experienced by the tribes, and only mention the victims belonging to the human species.

In the beginning of winter a Tunisian merchant arrived, in company with his better half, at a place called

Tifech, on the territory of the Saderata, in the circle of Constantine.

He had just entered a defile which leads to an ancient Roman town, known in the country under the name of Memissa, when the woman happened to be a little behind her husband. The latter had reached the end of the defile, driving before him the beasts of burden, laden with the merchandise he was accustomed to hawk about, when looking round he perceived that his wife had disappeared.

He hastened to retrace his steps, and very soon found himself in presence of a full-maned lion who was busily devouring the unfortunate wife. The lion paid no attention to him, and allowed him to retire in peace and gain a neighbouring douar with all his beasts.

It was in vain he entreated the Saderata to come with him and assist him in saving the mangled remains of his wife; they assigned as a pretext that night would surprise them in the defile, and they persuaded him to wait for the next day, promising their assistance to avenge the death of the poor victim.

At dawn the merchant fully armed was proceeding towards the place where his wife had fallen into the lion's jaws, and behind him marched thirty or forty men of the tribe.

Of the woman, however, nothing remained but some small fragments of her clothes torn to threads. The merchant, in despair, entreated the Saderata to show him the lion's resort, and to assist him in his revenge.

An hour afterwards they all arrived close to the repair, where the lion was asleep, digesting his dinner of the previous evening.

The first hurrah brought him to the top of a rock, stretching himself and yawning under the very beards of all these people.

"Come," said the Saderata to the merchant, "you must have the honour of the first shot; go up to him a little closer and put a bullet through his brains; we shall be ready to back you."

The poor man stepped a few paces forward, lowered his gun and fired.

In the twinkling of an eye he was seized, hurled to the ground, and torn to pieces, amidst the jeers of the Saderrata, who hastened to return to their douar to divide among themselves the property of the Tunisian couple.

A month afterwards, the Chegatma were hunting this lion after their own fashion. One of them, seeing him at the foot of the tree upon which he had perched, fired upon him. The lion measured the height, and finding it suited him, and was within his mark, he bounded against the trunk of the tree, and caught the hunter by the skirts of his burnous, pulled him to the ground, and tore him to shreds forthwith.

In the beginning of spring, three men of the same tribe were waiting for the lion on the top of some inaccessible rocks, near a fountain, where the lion was in the habit of drinking, thus named *Aïn-seïd*, or the "lion's fountain."

At dawn of day the lion appeared, carrying in his mouth a dead woman. After putting her down near the fountain, he licked the blood which flowed from her feet and hands, and then turned back again. Half an hour afterwards he came again, carrying in his mouth an Arab, who still gave some signs of life. At the moment the lion was depositing the body of the man close to that of the woman, the Chegatma fired together, and killed him dead on the spot. A few minutes after the man breathed his last.

Towards the end of the month of June, the Ouled-mehboul, of the tribe of the Seguia, met a lion on the mountain of Ounk-chérif. The lion having charged them, they lay down, elbow to elbow, and waited for him within close range. In spite of six shots, several of which hit him, the lion dashed upon them, wounded severely two men, and caught a third in his mouth, whom he carried off, shaking him furiously all the while, to more than a thousand yards' distance, where he was found dead.

In the month of July, at a place called Foum-el-hamia, were discovered the remains of the bodies of a man and a woman, whom the lion had surprised during the night, and devoured.

Near the end of the same month, some Arabs of the

tribe of Ouled-mehboul, having met in the Zéraser a lioness with two fine cubs, provoked her to charge them, whilst their companions were carrying off her young ones. The lioness, having retraced her steps, followed those who had carried off her progeny, and pursued them down into the very plain, and even under their tents. Here two men were caught by her; the first got off with one arm smashed, and several claw wounds; the second was killed.

The lioness having put to flight the whole inhabitants of the douar, by taking up her abode near the tent which contained her cubs, the Ouled-sassi were sent for to kill her, upon which the cheik Amar-ben-taïeb came up with fifteen of his men.

After dismounting, they advanced in a line, elbow to elbow, against the lioness, who, on perceiving them, charged immediately. In spite of the blaze of musketry which received her at point blank, she dashed upon these brave fellows, and died in the midst of them, but not without wounding severely three men.

Only a few days ago, a man (I ought to say a *woman*!) was waiting at ten o'clock in the evening for a young girl, with whom he had a rendezvous, at the foot of the Jehel-hanout, for the purpose of carrying her away from her parents.

On arriving, she said to this wretch, "See, who is following me?"

The villain, without any mercy, and utterly careless of the fate of the poor maiden, forsook her shamefully, and she was devoured by a lioness, who had seen her leave the douar, and had followed her to this spot.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A LAST CAMPAIGN WITH THE OULED-SASSI.—CONVERSATIONS UNDER THE TENT.—A LION WOUNDED IN HIS PERSONAL VANITY, A LEGEND FOR THE PRIVATE EDIFICATION OF COQUETTES.

I took the field once more on the 20th of October ; on the 23rd, I searched and beat carefully the mountain of Ounk-jemel, and on the evening of that same day I was encamped at the Ouled-sassi, between El-hanout and the Zéraser.

Having met from my guests, as usual, the most cordial reception, we spent part of the night, my spahi Hamida and I, under the cheik's tent, surrounded by a dozen Arabs of the douar. We talked about lions, of course, that inexhaustible fund of all conversations between men ; and I confess that I relished it not a little, entirely weaned as I had been, during a residence of twelve months in France, from all those stories and traditions, so full of interest, which the popular credulity has gathered in this country with respect to the monarch with the colossal head ; that terrible and mysterious lord, that fanciful and marvellous assemblage of cruelty and magnanimity, of unaccountable caprices, and of unparalleled audacity.

Among the narratives more or less authentic, which succeeded one another without interruption that evening, I will introduce one which Alexander Dumas embodied two years ago in his "Mousquetaire," from the recital of Hamida, whose memory is the most faithful I ever met with for traditions of this sort. It is a kind of philosophical legend, which I recommend to the meditation of young *coquettes*.

“Some hundred years before I came to this tribe,” said the narrator, “there lived in this same tribe a young girl particularly proud and haughty ; it was not that she was richer than her companions ; for her father had but his tent, his horse, and his gun ; but she was extremely beautiful, and from her beauty arose her pride.

“One day that she was going to cut wood in the neighbouring forest, she met a lion ; her only weapon was a small hatchet, and had she even carried along with this hatchet a dagger, a gun, and a carabine, she would not have ventured to use them, so mighty, so proud, and so majestic was this superb lion.

“She began to shake in all her limbs, trying to call for help, but endeavouring in vain to recover her paralyzed voice, and believing the lion was going to make her a sign to follow him, to devour her at his ease in some favourite spot ;—for lions are not only gastronomists, but refined gourmands. It is not enough for them to be gluttoned ; they must absorb their food with an elaborate sensuality which shall satisfy all the delicacy of their organization.

“The young girl therefore remained trembling from head to foot, expecting the lion to make her a sign to follow him, when, on the contrary, to her wonder and amazement, she saw him come close to her, smile upon her in his own way, and make her a bow after his fashion.

“She crossed her hands over her bosom, and said to him :

“‘My lord, what do you ask from your humble servant ?’

“The lion replied :

“‘A maiden so lovely as you, Aïcha, is not a servant, but a queen.

“Aïcha was altogether rejoiced at the extreme sweetness her interlocutor had given to his voice whilst speaking to her, and was at the same time agreeably surprised to find that this noble lion, whom she knew not, and whom she beheld, she thought, for the first time, knew her name.

“‘But, my lord, who can have told you my name?’ asked the young girl.

“‘Zephyr, who is in love with you, and who, after breathing through your golden tresses, carries their sweet perfume to the roses, saying, Aïcha! The water, which is in love with you, and which, after bathing your lovely feet, bedews the mossy bed of my cavern, saying, Aïcha! The bird, who is jealous of you, and who since he has heard you sing, sings no more, and dies out of sheer envy, saying, Aïcha!’

“The young girl blushed with pleasure, made a pretence of drawing her haïk over her face, and, in pretending to draw it on, she in fact pushed it a little more aside to give the lion a more favourable view of her.

“The latter, who had until then hesitated to come nearer to Aïcha, now made a few steps towards her, and seeing her turn very pale at this terrible vicinity:

“‘What can be the matter, Aïcha?’ he inquired, in his most anxious, and at the same time most caressing voice.

“The young maiden wished very much to answer, ‘I am dreadfully frightened at you, my lord;’ but she dared not, and said:

“‘The Touaregs are not far, and I am afraid of the Touaregs.’

“The lion smiled, as lions are wont to smile.

“‘When Aïcha is with me,’ said he, ‘Aïcha need fear nothing.’

“‘But,’ said Aïcha, ‘I shall not always have the honour of your company; it is getting very late, and I am far from my father’s tent.’

“‘I will accompany you,’ said the lion.

“Thus taken unawares, Aïcha accepted the offer that was made: the lion came near her, and held out his mane to her; the young girl leant her hand upon it, as she would have leant her arm on the arm of her lover, and they both began walking side by side towards the tent of Aïcha’s father.

“On their road they met gazelles who were sadly frightened, hyenas who crouched down, men and women who dropped on their knees.

“But the lion said to the gazelles, ‘fly not away;’ to

the hyenas, 'fear not;' to the men and women, 'rise up: because of this young maiden, who is my beloved, I will do you no harm.'

"And the gazelles stood still, the hyenas feared no longer, the men and women rose up again, staring with amazement at the lion and at the maiden, and inquiring in their idiom of gazelles, in their language of hyenas, in their voices of men and women, whether this lion and this maiden were not going on a pilgrimage to adore Mahomet's tomb at Mecca.

"In this manner they arrived at the douar; then, when they were only at a few paces from the tent of Aïcha's father, which was the first on entering the village, the lion stopped, and, like the very best bred lover in the world, begged the young girl to allow him to kiss her.

"The young maiden held out her face, and the lion touched with his lips the rosy lips of Aïcha. Then he made her a sign of farewell and sat down, as if he wished to make sure that no accident would befall her in the short space she had still to go over.

"During this small distance, the young girl turned round twice or thrice, and saw the lion still sitting at the same place. Then she entered her father's tent. 'Oh! there you are,' cried the latter, 'I was very anxious about you.'

"The young girl smiled.

"I was afraid some dangerous encounter had befallen you.'

"The young girl smiled again.

"But now that I see you, it is clear that I was mistaken.'

"So you were, dear father,' said the young girl, 'for, instead of a dangerous encounter, I have had a very good one.'

"How?'

"I have met a lion.'

"Notwithstanding the impassibility so characteristic of all Arabs, Aïcha's father turned pale.

"A lion!' he repeated, 'and he has not devoured you?'

"On the contrary, he paid me great compliments on

my beauty, offered to accompany me home, and did in fact bring me almost to your door.'

"The Arab fancied that his daughter was becoming mad.

"'It is impossible!' said he.

"'How impossible?'

"'Certainly; how can you expect me to believe a lion capable of such gallantry?'

"'Would you like to convince yourself?'

"'In what way?'

"'Only just come to the door of your tent and you will see him, either sitting at the spot where I left him, or returning home.'

"'Wait till I take my gun.'

"'What for?' asked the proud young girl; 'are you not with me?'

"And pulling her father by his burnous, she led him to the door of his tent.

"But the lion was no longer at the place where she had left him. She looked in the direction by which she had returned; she saw nothing.

"'Come, child! you have been dreaming,' said the Arab, re-entering his tent.

"'Father, I can swear to you that I see him yet before my eyes,' said the young girl.

"'Describe him to me.'

"'He might be four feet high and seven feet long.'

"'Well?'

"'A magnificent mane.'

"'What next?'

"'Fine yellow eyes and brilliant as gold.'

"'Continue.'

"'Teeth like ivory, only—'

"The young girl hesitated.

"'Only?'—repeated the Arab.

"The young girl lowered her voice.

"'Only,' said she, 'his breath smells very strong.'

"She had no sooner uttered these words than a tremendous roar was heard behind the tent, then a second roar at about five hundred yards, then a third at a mile off.

“After this nothing more was heard. There had not been more than a minute’s interval between each roar.

“It was evident that the lion, who, no doubt, wished to know the young girl’s opinion of him, had turned in a semicircle to go and listen behind the tent, and that he was retiring horribly mortified at being informed of a disadvantage, which is the more serious because they who are afflicted by it can never perceive it themselves.

“A month passed by and the young girl thought no more about the lion, except when she related her adventure to her companions.

“Then, at the end of the month, she returned one day to the same place to cut a fagot.

“The fagot being cut, placed in a bundle, and tied up, she heard a noise behind her and turned round.

“The lion was seated at four paces from her, looking at her.

“‘Good day to you, Aïcha,’ he said in a dry tone.

“‘Good day, my lord,’ answered Aïcha in a rather trembling voice; for she well remembered what she had said about the strong breath of her protector, and it seemed to her as if she still heard the triple roar which had followed this ungracious revelation. ‘Good day, my lord; can I do any thing to please you?’

“‘You can render me a service.’

“‘Only mention it.’

“‘Come nearer to me.’

“Aïcha, rather ill at ease, came closer, saying, ‘Here I am.’

“‘Very well; now raise your hatchet.’

“The young girl obeyed.

“‘The hatchet is raised,’ she said.

“‘Well, give me a blow with it on the head.’

“‘But, my lord, you don’t think of it.’

“‘On the contrary, I do think of it, and very seriously too.’

“‘But, my lord—’

“‘Strike.’

“‘Yet, my lord—’

“‘Strike, I beseech you.’

“‘Is it to be a heavy or a slight blow?’

“‘As heavy as you possibly can.’

“‘I am afraid I shall hurt you.’

“‘Never mind! How can that concern you?’

“‘You insist upon it?’

“‘I do.’

“The young girl dealt her blow in good earnest, and the hatchet traced a bloody line between the lion’s eyes.

“It is from that time that lions date that vertical wrinkle, particularly visible when they frown and knit their brow.

“‘Thank you, Aïcha,’ said the lion; and in three bounds he disappeared through the wood.

“‘Well!’ said the young coquette, rather annoyed in her turn, ‘he does not accompany me home to-day.’

“And she bent her steps towards the douar, which she reached without any accident.

“It is useless to say that this second story formed the counterpart of the first; but the commentaries of the wisest Talebs of the douar, however scientific, could never fathom the mysteries of the lion’s intention, which remained concealed even from the most penetrating minds.

“Another month passed by, and the young girl returned to the wood.

“At the moment she was cutting down the first branches destined to make her fagot, a large bush opened before her, and out of it marched the lion, no longer gracious like the first time, nor doleful like the second, but gloomy, sullen, and almost threatening.

“The young girl was tempted to fly, but the look of the lion nailed her feet to the ground. He approached Aïcha; she would have dropped down, had she attempted to make one step.

“‘Look at my brow,’ said the lion.

“‘Let my lord be pleased to remember that it was he who ordered me to strike him with my hatchet.’

“‘So I did, and I thanked you for it. It is, therefore, not that about which I mean to ask you.’

“‘What does my lord choose to ask of me?’

“‘To look at my wound.’

“‘I am looking at it.’

“‘Well, how is it?’

“‘Perfectly, my lord, almost entirely healed.’

“‘Which proves, Aïcha,’ said the lion, ‘that the wounds made in our body are very different from those that are inflicted on our pride: the former are cicatrized in more or less time; the latter, never.’

“This philosophical axiom was followed by one sharp, doleful cry, and nothing more was heard.

“Three days after, the father of the fair Aïcha, beating about all the environs to try and discover some trace of his daughter, found, in the middle of a large spot of blood, the hatchet she was in the habit of using for cutting wood.

“But of Aïcha, neither by him nor by any one else, was ever any farther trace discovered.”

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE YOUNG LION AND THE WOODCUTTER.

DURING the same night, at the conclusion of this rather doleful legend, a no less instructive fable, entitled *The young Lion and the Woodcutter*, was recited to us by the youngest of our guests, desirous to contribute his part to the general conversation, and to shorten in his turn the long hours of this night of expectation.

“Among the formidable hosts of the Aurès mountains,” he began, “there lived once a lioness who had never had any family. At last, however, she gave birth to a fine young lion. She lavished upon him every sort of caress and endearment, and left to nature alone the care of developing all the qualities of his race. If he ventured to leave his repair to take some short excursion through the mountain, she immediately called him back, covered him with new caresses, and never ceased repeating to

him this recommendation: 'My child, beware of the son of woman!'

"By degrees, however, our spoilt child picked up his strength; his limbs swelled out with fine hard muscles, and his mane began to show. 'Now,' he said one day to his mother, 'I feel strong, I am full of courage, and the son of woman inspires me with no fear. I will go and find him out, and try my chance with him.'

"The mother much alarmed, tried at first to dissuade him from this resolve; but without effect. Unable to conquer her son's obstinacy, she repeated to him again all her recommendations of prudence, and intrusted him to the care of heaven.

"Our young lion bounded immediately out of the repair and gained resolutely the top of the mountains. He proceeded a good while without finding any thing worthy to attract his attention. All of a sudden, in a distant forest, he beheld a bull; his horns threatened the skies; his glaring eyes sparkled with incessant fire; his tail lashed his powerful flanks, and his feet tore up the earth to throw it far behind him.

"The young lion stopped; 'here,' said he, 'I behold an animal whose formidable appearance corresponds with the description they have given me of the son of woman; this must be my great enemy, I will march up to him.' He settled and composed his walk in the best way he could, and went up to the bull. 'It is no doubt you,' said he pompously, 'who are the son of woman?'

"'My friend, you are crazed,' answered the bull; 'the courage which inspires the son of woman, God has given to him alone. Do you know how he treats us, me and all those of my race? he seizes us, places a heavy yoke over our heads, and makes us minister to his wants. If we attempt to be lazy or rebellious, the goad is there, ever at hand to stimulate or punish us. And, lastly, when exhausted with fatigues we can yield him no more labour, as a reward for our services, the axe awaits us. The son of woman kills us, cuts up our flesh and makes it his food.'

"The young lion listened silently to the bull's words; he reflected a moment, and then resumed his journey; his spirit was rather troubled, as you may conceive, but he was nevertheless resolved to go and meet his enemy, even if it should be necessary for that object to move heaven and earth.

"He walked on a little while and suddenly found himself in the presence of a camel, who was regaling himself, grazing with delight in a field of chik.

"‘Now,’ said the young lion to himself, ‘this must surely be the son of woman; my good stars have brought him to me. . . . Halloo! my fine fellow!’ he exclaimed, marching up to him, ‘is it not you who are the son of woman?’

"The camel was forthwith convulsed by the wildest fit of laughter.

"‘Not exactly, friend,’ said he, ‘not exactly; but, by the bye, what may you want with the son of woman? You had better be careful; whatever may be your worth, you cannot compete with him. Do you think, now, that you could tie my knees together, force me to lie down to place me more at your convenience, fasten a pannier on my back; and, after heaping burden on burden, sit yourself coolly on the top of it all? You could not, eh? . . . Well, this is daily accomplished by the son of woman. If, besides, he should take a fancy to cut my throat, I should be without the slightest defence, and totally in his power. Such are, my dear fellow, the manners and ways of the son of woman. Should you still be desirous to make his acquaintance, you may continue your journey.’

"‘You are a coward, friend,’ replied the young lion, in a tone he meant to be disdainful. ‘Your words, and those of that bull I met over there, have entered at one of my ears and gone out through the other. They by no means diminish my desire to find myself face to face with my enemy; therefore, I go on.’ He had proceeded but a small distance, when he saw a horse bounding and capering in a meadow. ‘This time,’ said our rambler, ‘I must have found the object of my researches. Ho! ha!

he screamed, still far off, it is you, no doubt, who are the son of woman ?’

“ ‘You are speaking to me ?’ inquired the horse.

“ ‘And who should I be speaking to, pray ?’

“ ‘Well, in that case, carry your bad jokes somewhere else ; allow me to roll about in peace on this beautiful grass, and disturb not my gambols I, the son of a woman !’ he continued ‘ Bless your growing mane ! he will come soon enough to catch me, put a saddle on my back, and an iron bit in my mouth.’

“ ‘Really !’ said the young lion.

“ ‘That astonishes you ’ resumed the horse ; it would be little indeed, my friend, if springing afterwards on my back, he did not plough up my flesh with his sharp, long spurs, and make the blood stream down my flanks.’

“The young lion was confounded ; and a cold sweat ran through all his limbs. He began to fear this time he had gone too far ; but he did not think it possible to draw back. Therefore he pursued his journey absorbed in thought.

“Presently he found himself in a forest, and saw before him a woodcutter. ‘It is not possible,’ thought he, ‘that this can be the son of woman, who from all I have heard, must be a true phenomenon. Never mind, I shall interrogate this puny, wretched creature ; he may, after all, help me to find out the being I am looking for.’

“ ‘Good morning, my friend,’ he said to the woodcutter, coming near him ; ‘for a long time I have been in quest of the son of woman ; could you perchance assist me to find him out ?’

“ ‘Why, my lord, nothing is more easy,’ replied the woodcutter ; ‘I will go and fetch him for you : but before I start, pray have the goodness to lend me a hand, for you seem to be pretty tolerably strong ; just please to put your paw in the cleft of this trunk, to prevent it from closing whilst I am away.’

“The lion did as he was desired ; the woodcutter drew out the wedge which kept asunder the two halves of the tree-trunk ; the latter suddenly contracted, holding the animal tighter than any blacksmith’s vice. He

tried hard to extricate his paw, but all his efforts were vain. The woodcutter darted off immediately, cut down rapidly a dozen strong and knotty cudgels, and quickly returned; he then seized our young lion by the tail, and set to belabouring him in such a style that he well-nigh smashed all his bones, and made his back almost as soft as his belly. At last he let him go, inviting him to communicate to his friends and acquaintances his own personal opinion about the son of woman.

“Our young lion, half murdered, returned limping and halting to his repair. When his mother saw him appear in this pitiful condition, she reproached herself bitterly for her weakness; she placed him in the safest part of her chamber, and began licking him and taking every care of him. ‘You see, my son,’ said she to him, ‘that my recommendations were not unwise; you certainly must have met to-day the son of woman.’

“The young lion related to his mother every thing that had passed.

“‘Remain here in peace and console yourself,’ said his mother. ‘I will go and call together all the lions of our mountains, and I will take them to the forest; we shall avenge you, rely upon it.’

“She started accordingly, and gathered together all the lions of the mountain; then she returned home, and showing to her son this formidable squadron:

“‘Think you,’ said she, ‘that these will be able to revenge you?’

“‘No doubt,’ said the young lion; ‘but I should have had much more pleasure in avenging myself.’

“‘Get up then,’ cried the excited lioness, ‘and march before us.’

“This terrible troop then moved on, and arrived near the woodcutter, roaring in a dreadful chorus.

“‘I am lost!’ cried the latter, beholding the lions; ‘this will be my last day.’ He threw a rapid glance round him, took hold of the loftiest tree, and climbed to the top of it.

“The lions, when arrived at the foot of the tree, were at a loss to know how to dislodge our man. ‘I will show you the way,’ said the young lion, ‘I will remain

at the foot of the tree and serve you as a scaling-ladder ; you will climb one over the other on my back until you have reached our enemy, then you will pass him down to me ; I will take care of him.' The plan was highly approved, and a pyramid of lions was instantly formed along the tree. The topmost was just about to reach the woodcutter when he shouted out :

“ ‘ For mercy’s sake, just hand me my cudgel to caress the ribs of that fellow below there ! ’ ”

“ The sound of this voice and the thoughts of the cudgel frightened our young lion to such a degree, that he suddenly withdrew from under the pyramid, and ran away at full speed. All the lions tumbled down with so much speed and violence, that those who were not killed were, at least, terribly bruised.

“ The woodcutter rushed down rapidly, despatched the wounded, and took off the skins of the whole troop ; then, loaded with those superb trophies, he returned to his douar, singing his own victory.”

Thus ended the Tale of the Lion and the Woodcutter.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A LAST COMBAT.—THE LIONESS OF EL-HANOUT AND THE INTRUDING FLY.—THE AUTHOR’S FAREWELL.

THE Arab had ceased speaking, and the first glimmerings of dawn had begun to penetrate into the tent.

I took my weapons, and, shaking hands with my host who was wishing us every good luck, I bent my steps, accompanied by Hamida, towards the summit of the Zéraser, where it had been settled the day before that I should await the signal we had agreed upon. This signal was a fire.

At twelve o'clock I saw a white smoke begin slowly to ascend over the ridge of El-hanout ; at one o'clock I was dismounting at the foot of this mountain, where thirty men of the Ouled-sassi were waiting for me.

After climbing eight hundred yards of perpendicular rocks I reached the culminating point, and the man who had seen the lioness showed me her abode, two hundred yards below me. A defile, four or five yards broad, led from the resort up to the narrow pass where I stood, while on both sides there were high perpendicular rocks, quite insurmountable.

I saw that the lioness as she rose up must either charge those who should wake her, or, following this defile, pass close to my feet.

With other men than the Ouled-sassi, and even with them had it been a lion, I should have prepared to march straight up to the spot.

But I knew both my men and the beast, and I felt certain that by marching up to her in close ranks, with guns ready shouldered, without firing, or putting her in a fury by useless and unseasonable shoutings, I felt certain, I say, that every thing would go on satisfactorily.

I seated myself with Hamida on a rock five or six feet high which commanded the said passage, and then made a sign to the Ouled-sassi to proceed forward.

The den was simply a recess in the rocks, in which grew a few stunted juniper-trees.

My thirty men, divided in two dense groups, marched straight upon the lioness, who sat bolt upright when they came within fifty paces of her ; then, putting one knee to the ground, and with their guns ready shouldered, they invited her gently and politely to rise, and take a look at what was going on at the other side of the mountain.

But the lioness did not seem at all disposed to take the hint ; she showed them all her teeth, and did not move ; upon which display of amiability, one of the men set fire to the dry grass which covered the soil, and the wind helping, the lioness found herself under the necessity of shifting her quarters.

She rose slowly, and began ascending the slope which

led to the post I occupied. She pulled up twenty times to look behind her, and on reaching the narrow pass, she sat herself down at seven or eight paces from me, staring at me with a somewhat wicked eye, and seeming to measure the height of the rock, which, for her, was any thing but inaccessible.

Finding my sitting posture inconvenient for shooting, I rose up; upon which, she also got up, but without advancing one step.

I took my aim between her eye and ear; but, at the moment I was softly pressing the trigger, a fly came and placed itself right between my eye and the sight, running to and fro, and putting me involuntarily in mind of the "busy, busy fly" in La Fontaine's charming fable: *La Mouche du Coche*.

Twice I shook the barrels of my carabine without succeeding in driving off this wretched insect; yet the lioness was still there quite motionless, with head erect, and her eyes fixed on my eyes.

For fear of a mistake, on account of this annoying accident, in trying for the head, I took her in the shoulder, and fired. Whilst the lioness was writhing and twisting herself, but without falling as yet, the sights of my gun being now disengaged by the disappearance of the intruding fly, I put my second bullet in her ear, and she fell as if thunderstruck.

Thus ended the lioness of El-hanout, which I despatched that very evening for Constantine. She was my last victim.

Next day I was encamped at Foun-el-hamma; I ordered the Fed-joudj to be searched, the Gouriret was beat up, the reeds of Eimerguenin were set on fire, but all without result, and the weather now became so bad that it was not possible to keep the field any longer.

CONCLUSION.

Such are the principal exploits, which have been accomplished during this period of the ten first years of my hunting life ; I say, the principal exploits, for dreading lest I should fatigue the reader by tiresome repetitions, I have passed over unnoticed the death of several lions and panthers, killed without any incidents particularly worthy of notice.

I now bid the courteous reader for the present FAREWELL.

APPENDIX.

As every thing concerning the lion finds its natural place in connexion with this volume, I have thought it might not be without interest for many of my readers to be acquainted with the ideas of the Arabs themselves with respect to the lion.

For this reason I begged Mr. Cherbonneau, professor of the Arabic language at the University of Constantine, to have the kindness to translate for me the two following chapters of Dameïri and Kazouïni, the only authors among them who have written on the history of animals.

I.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE LION, TAKEN FROM DAMEÏRI'S WORK, ENTITLED "HAÛET AND HAÏAWANE."—DESCRIPTION OF THE ANIMAL.—CURIOUS TRADITIONARY NOTIONS OF THE ARABS.

Dameïri, who lived in the eighth century of the Hegira, composed a "History of Animals." in two large quarto volumes.

The method followed by this author does not in the least resemble that adopted by the naturalists of modern Europe. His notices, indeed, are simply placed in alphabetical order, and intermixed with numberless digressions, the relevancy of which is by no means obvious. The work opens by the monography

of the lion, immediately after the invocation to the prophet, that preface of all Mussulman books. Dameïri writes as follows.

The Arabs designate the lion by the generic name of Açade, oftener Ouçoude ; it is the classical term found in the Koran, in the books of poetry, in the natural histories, and in the fables of Lokman, the wise.

The Algerian dialect has adopted the expression Sseid, oftener Ssiouda, with an emphatic s which we represent by a double s. The lioness is called Louba, the lion's cub Chebel ; in written discourses they make use of five hundred words, almost all *adjectives*, to describe the sultan of animals. These words are all epithets chosen by various writers to express his moral or physical qualities, his habits, or his faults.

I will only quote here those most generally used : El-táadje, the crowned ; Djahdeb, the thick-set ; El-hâreth, the finder-out ; Er-ribâle, the rapacious ; Ez-zoufar, the hero ; Es-sabone, the wild beast by excellence ; Es-saab, the haughty ; Ed-dhor-gâme, the valorous ; Ed-dhigrème, the biter ; El-tirar, the active ; El-ambess, the tremendous ; El-gadhaufar, the strong ; El-karaïça, the tearer ; El-kaçoura, the recluse ; El-kahar, the impetuous ; El-laïts, the vigorous ; El-metamène, the intrepid ; El-nehhâbe, the hunter ; El-mofarrasse, the devourer ; El-ouerd, the yellow one ; Aboûl-abtâte, the father of heroes ; Abou-zafrâne, the red-haired animal ; Aboul-akriass, the monster which dwells in caverns ; Abou-achebâle, the father of young hunters (lion's cubs) ; Aboûl-abâsse, the animal with the awful countenance ; Aboûl-hafss, the devouring monster ; Aboûl-harts, the animal which ploughs up the ground with his nails. The grammarian Ali-ben-kacem-ben-djaafar managed to add a hundred more names or surnames to the list we have already mentioned ; which is an evident proof of the richness of the Arabic language.

The lioness produces but one cub at a time. This cub is at its birth without form (*sahma*, a lump of flesh almost deprived of any articulation) ; he remains three days without life or movement ; on the fourth day, the male approaches and blows upon him until he begins to breathe ; then, when he has

moved and stretched out his limbs, the mother offers him the breast, but he only opens his eyes after seven days. The period of suckling only lasts six months, at the end of which time the lion and lioness take their nursling out hunting, and teach him to tear up his prey.

It is generally thought that there does not exist in the whole creation an animal more capable than the lion of bearing hunger and thirst. When he feels too sharply the pangs of hunger he becomes cruel and unmerciful; but he is no sooner glutted, than his temper is changed and softened. He prefers the flesh of living animals, especially of those he has just killed; he disdains dead bodies, and prefers hunting a fresh prey to return to the remains of the first one. He dislikes quenching his thirst in water where a dog has been drinking.

Some observers have remarked that the crowing of a cock, or the sound of a cup when drummed upon, both frighten him.

He flies before a cat, and the sight of a blazing fire inspires him with fear¹.

The lion entertains such an opinion of his strength and superiority, that he associates with no other animal. He is of an excessively sanguine temperament, and in a constant fever.

The lion's life is long; the loss of his teeth is the sign of his old age.

If we may credit the historians, the lion was so mild at the time of our Saviour (*Aïca*), that he used to graze in peace with the camel and the other quadrupeds.

Our books of hadits, or Mohammedan traditions, are filled with reflections on this glorious animal.

I will only mention the three following ones, taken at random:

“When the lion roars, he says: ‘O Lord, expose not to my blows the virtuous man, give me strength only against the wicked.’”

¹ So this author; but this is not the modern experience: when accustomed to it, the numerous fires which surround the douar do not seem to scare him away.

Ali-ben-ali-ehaleb, cousin of the prophet, addressed this recommendation to the true believers : " When you travel through a country infested by lions, you will save yourself from danger by invoking Daniel in the den."

When Noah planted the vine, Iblis approached the tree and dried it up with her breath ; as the patriarch was giving way to despair, Iblis returned and said to him : " If you wish your vine to grow green again, take seven animals, cut their throats, and pour their blood over it."

In consequence of this advice, Noah sacrificed a lion, a bear, a tiger, a dog, a fox, a magpie, and a cock ; he then poured the blood of all these animals over the plant which had only produced before one sort of grapes. The following year this vine produced seven sorts of grapes, or rather, grapes possessed of seven different virtues ; which sufficiently explains how the man who gets intoxicated becomes courageous, strong, passionate, quarrelsome, cunning, talkative, and uproarious.

The properties of the lion are numerous. Many Arabs have reflected and made experiments on the subject. When Noah, they say, placed in the ark a couple of each species of animals, his companions, and the members of his family said to him, " What security can we expect, both for ourselves and for the other animals, so long as the lion dwells with us in so small a building ?"

The holy patriarch began to pray to the Lord. Presently fever descended from heaven, and seized upon the king of animals, that tranquillity of mind might be restored to the inhabitants of the ark. There is no other explanation of the origin of fever in this world.

But there was in the ship an enemy no less noxious, and this was the mouse. Noah's companions made him observe that it would be impossible for them to preserve from its contact their clothes or their provisions. A new prayer was addressed to the Almighty by the patriarch, at the end of which the lion sneezed, and out of his nostrils jumped a cat. It is from that moment that the mouse is so timorous, and has contracted the habit of hiding in holes.

Physicians have made with the flesh, the skin, the hair, the

fat, and the gall of the lion, experiments, which it will be useful to mention.

The following are those whose results are best known. You find in the work of Abd-el-mekk, entitled "Description of the Properties of Animals," that he who rubs his body over with lion's fat, will see every other wild beast fly before him.

To cure a child of epilepsy, you have only to suspend around his neck a piece of lion's skin until the age of puberty. After that time the recipe would have no effect.

If you wish to preserve a place from the approach of carnivorous animals, you have nothing to do but to burn in it some lion's hair.

A person attacked with hemiplegy, or palsy of one half of the body, must use as a remedy lion's flesh. By putting a bit of lion's skin in a trunk, you will succeed in preserving every thing in it from all sorts of vermin, except moths.

When you suffer from toothache, only carry about your person a lion's tooth, and the pain will vanish.

An infallible remedy against chilblains is to rub your feet and hands with lion's fat.

Pomatum made with lion's grease destroys all the varieties of insects which assail the body of man.

Lastly, if you wish to save yourself from the deceit and artifices of your neighbour, just carry constantly about you a lion's tail.

Abd-el-mekk assures us also that the roar of the sultan of animals kills the crocodile.

I have read in the writings of Hormouz (Kermés) that, by merely sitting on a lion's skin, you can be cured from ankylosis. If you wish to be imposing to men, and respected by princes, you must take some of the grease gathered on the forehead of this superb animal, melt it in rose-water, and rub your face with it.

El-tabari mentions some other extraordinary recipes, such as the following: "To cure the king's evil, and generally all serofulous diseases, you must apply on the ulcers a plaster composed of lion's gall, melted with honey. The most efficacious process to get rid of the tetters is to rub the skin with lion's dung, dried

in the sun, and reduced to powder. You will cure inflammation of the bowels by swallowing quite hot a beverage composed as follows : Some lion's flesh, dried in the sun, sprinkled over with nitre, then pounded down in a mortar with some *sarrik*, or roasted wheat, and diluted in boiling water."

The same author says, that if you throw some powder of lion's dung in the glass of a drinker, his inclination to drunkenness will know no bounds.

There are also some old sayings like the following: "More courageous than the lion, more generous than the lion, more fetid than the lion."

The image of the lion acts an important part in dreams, and gives birth to omens and presages, which the necromancers have not neglected to interpret. I shall close this chapter by an enumeration of the advices, conjectures, and predictions which may be drawn from the dreams which are filled by the apparition, either favourable or menacing, of the sultan of animals.

If you see a lion in your dream, it proves two things: either the earth is about to be governed by a powerful and implacable tyrant, or death is near at hand.

When an invalid dreams that a lion is flying before him, make sure that his disease is about to leave him.

When in a dream you have felt yourself hurled to the ground by a lion, you may be sure that fever will soon seize you.

He who, during the visions of his sleep, tears out from the lion some hair, bones, or flesh, is about to obtain from the king, or take from the enemy, some vast treasures.

When the animal's apparition causes you a great panic, it is a sign of some impending and serious misfortune.

To see yourself lying side by side with a lion, indicates that you have nought to fear from your enemy.

When the animal seems to spring on a group of men, you must conclude that the king will oppress his subjects.

To eat, in a dream, a lion's head, is a presage that you will become the head of the state.

To hunt and seek for prey in company with a lion, means that you are to be called to the ministry (*vizierate*).

A slave who, during his sleep, has fancied himself exter-

minating a lion, must look upon it as a presage of his manumission.

The blood of the king of the creation has no less virtue than the other parts of his body. It is a local remedy against cancers; prepared with colocynth, and diluted on the skin, it destroys white leprosy (*el-barass*).

Be careful never to allow small cattle to drink after the lion in stagnant waters; you would see them become daily leaner, and at last die.

The sound of a drum, made of lion's skin, makes horses ill.

And yet that same skin possesses wonderful properties. I have heard it said, that the day you are seized with the quartan ague, you must stretch yourself on a lion's skin, with your whole body closely wrapt up in warm blankets, and perspiration will restore the calm in your blood.

The Arabs have immense faith in amulets composed either of the hair, nails, or teeth of the animal we have just described.

APPENDIX.

II.

EXTRACT FROM THE BOOK OF KAZOUÏNI, ENTITLED "ADJAÏB EL MAKHLOUKAT."—MARVELS OF CREATION.—MONOGRAPHY OF THE LION.

THE lion is the strongest, the most audacious, and the most formidable of all animals. There does not exist in the whole creation a being endowed with a more terrible appearance.

God has given him an enormous head, a round face, large expanded jaws, nails as sharp as his teeth, most muscular fore-arms, a broad chest, and elegant hind-quarters. The power of his voice is astounding. No other animal can resist him, or dare to attack him openly.

It is asserted that he never feeds on that which has been chased by other animals. When he falls upon a prey of the kind, he devours the heart and leaves the rest.

He is too noble, and too proud, to return and appease his hunger on the victim of the previous day.

He loves both the songs of men and the sound of musical instruments.

At night, if he perceives a light, he will make straight for the spot where it is kindled; then his fury seems to relax, and his movements become less violent.

It has been remarked that he does not hunt those who humble themselves, and who prostrate themselves before him.

As soon as he is glutted with flesh, he goes to seek for salt to facilitate his digestion.

Some pretend that when he feels ill, he eats a monkey to cure himself.

The lion is always in a fever; it is for that reason that the Arabs designate fever by the words: *da-el-açad*, the lion's evil.

When that animal's paw has been pierced through with an

arrow, he eats sword-grass (*es saad*) to make the projectile fall from his wound.

But he is the only animal with whom this remedy is successful.

Often a scratch, or an ulcer, will cause his death ; such is the difficulty he finds in keeping off the flies which fasten upon it, and breed therein the germ of corruption.

His roar is so tremendous, that every animal flies before its awful sound ; except the ass, whose limbs are palsied with terror.

But, when hunting, he takes care not to make his voice heard.

Before bringing forth, the lioness makes choice of a damp soil, for fear the ants should cause the death of her cubs by introducing themselves into their organs.

What is truly worthy of remark is, that the lioness, when she goes hunting far from her young ones, has the prudence to efface the traces of her steps, so that none may discover the direction of her lair.

This is how the lion trains up his cubs in the excursions they make together :

If the young animal happens to shudder at the sound of a scream, or voice of any sort, he draws him close to himself, and discharges in his ear a regular thunder of roars.

No beast in all nature has so fetid a breath as the lion.

In the dark of night his eyes glare like red-hot coals ; in this, he resembles the tiger, the cat, and the viper.

He loses all his courage in presence of a leather bag swelled out with wind.

If we credit some chronicles, the lion will sometimes come up to the sea-shore, or to the banks of a large river, and watch the sailors, crouching flat down on his belly, with half-closed eyes, and concealed behind a rock or tree, to which are fastened the boat ropes.

As the fishing commences before daylight, a man must necessarily come ashore, and in the dark, to unfasten the ropes ; he then pounces upon him and devours him.

PROPERTIES AND USES OF THE VARIOUS PARTS OF THIS ANIMAL.

To cure a limb affected by nervous trembling, it will be sufficient to rub it with an ointment composed of lion's brain and rank oil.

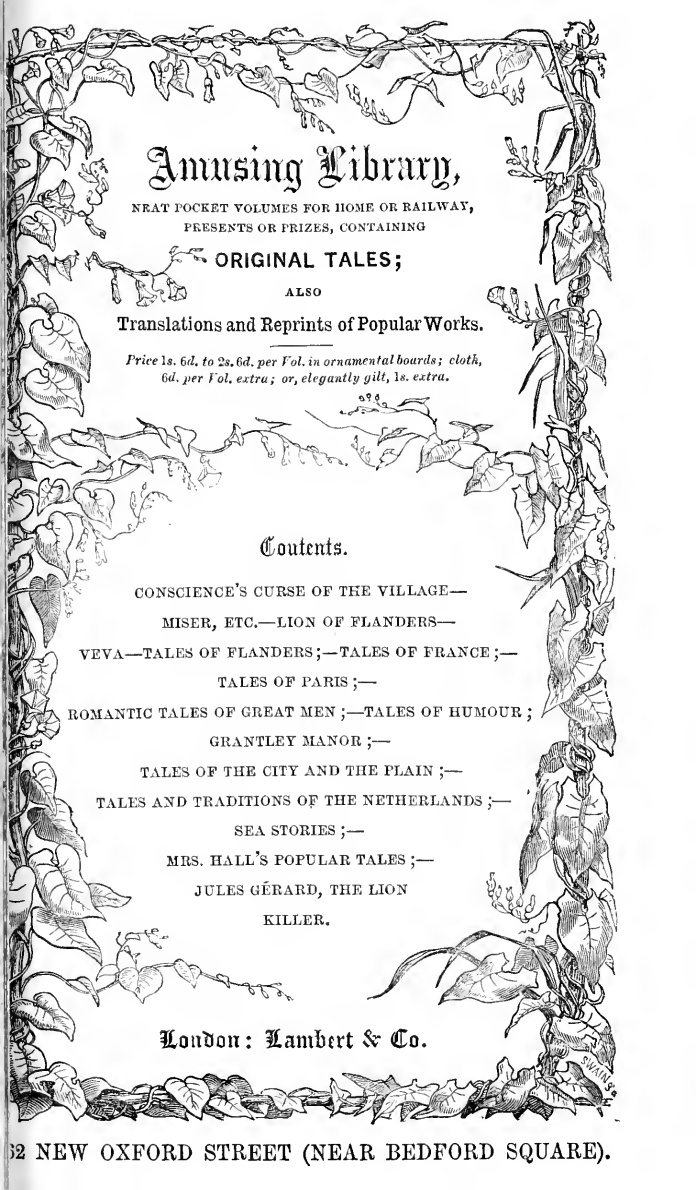
If you wish to spare a child the sufferings of dentition, suspend to his neck a lion's tooth.

The gall of the lion, taken as a beverage, imparts to men courage, boldness, and intrepidity.

The same is a certain remedy against epilepsy and the loss of hair; also, by rubbing the eyelids with it, you may stop the hemorrhage of the eyes.

THE END.

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